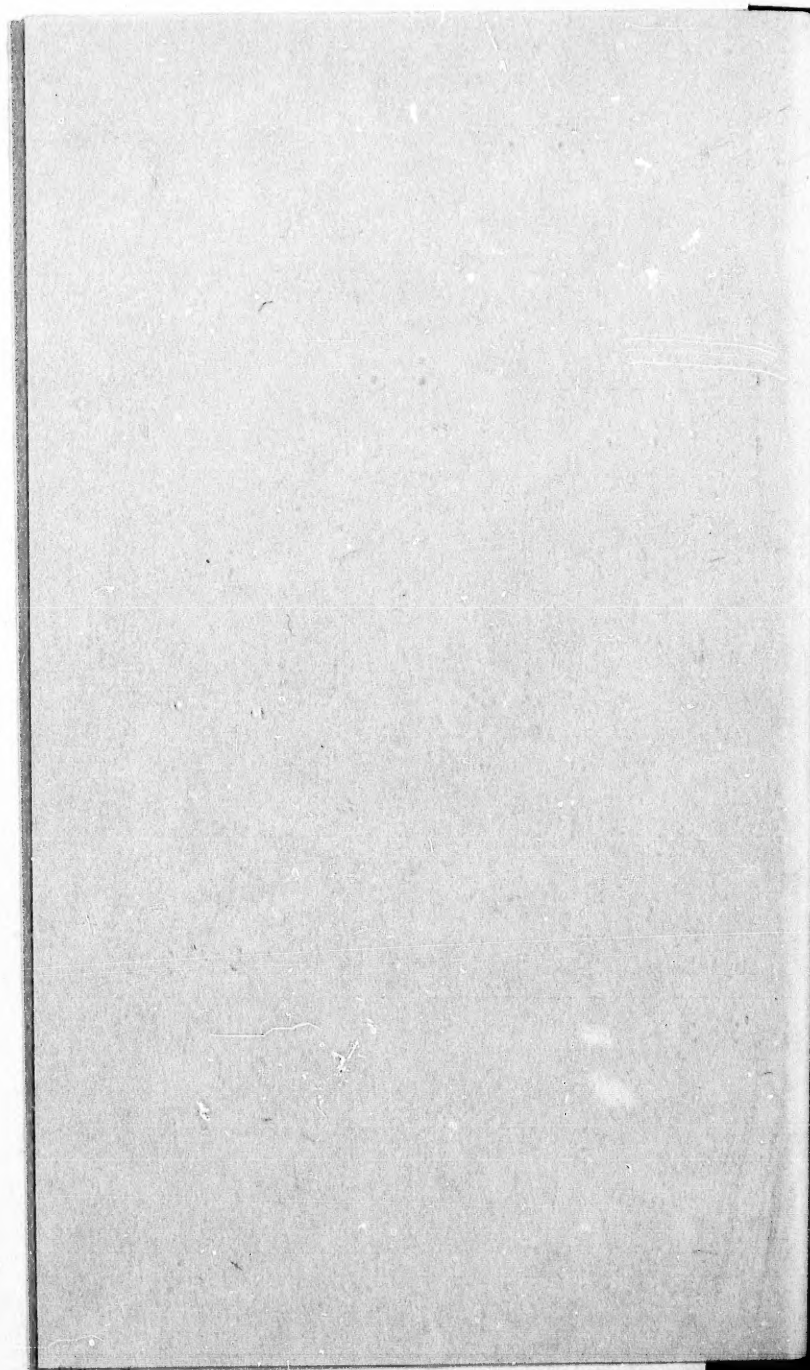




R. S. Wilson
Fenton Rectory
Cambridge

FASTING COMMUNION

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FASTING COMMUNION

HISTORICALLY INVESTIGATED FROM
THE CANONS AND FATHERS, AND SHOWN TO
BE NOT BINDING IN ENGLAND.

BY THE REV.

HOLLINGWORTH TULLY KINGDON, M.A.

ASSISTANT-CURATE, S. ANDREW'S, WELLS STREET:
LATE VICE-PRINCIPAL OF SALISBURY THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE.

MORIBUS UTENTIUM IN CONTRARIUM NONNULLE LEGES
HODIE ABROGATÆ SUNT.—*Gratian.*

Ο ΜΗ ΝΗΣΤΕΥΟΝ ΤΟ ΠΑΙΣΧΑ ΕΠΙΤΕΛΕΙ ΚΑΝ ΙΗΜΕΡΟΝ ΚΑΝ ΑΥΡΙΟΝ
ΚΑΝ ΟΡΟΤΕΟΥΝ ΜΕΤΑΙΧΗ ΤΗ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ.—*S. Chrysostom.*

SECOND EDITION.

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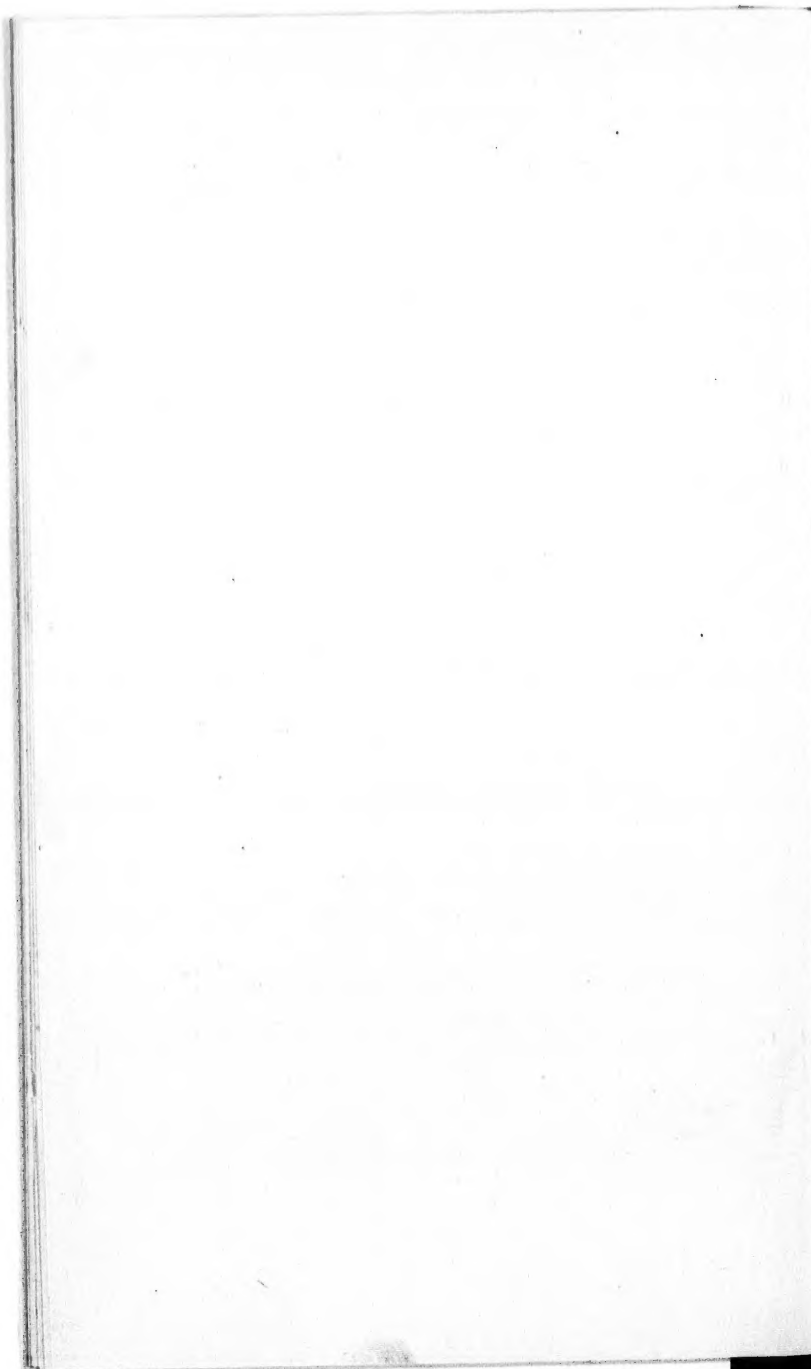
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Errata.

Page 71, line 4 from foot, for sixth read seventh.
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FASTING COMMUNION.

INTRODUCTION.

A FEW years ago a Jesuit father, English by birth and education, was conducting a retreat for priests in the north of France. One day, at the time of recreation, the parish priest called on his brethren to sympathize with him in his satisfaction at having that day communicated *two men*. The English priest was astonished. 'What! only two?' and the answer was, 'I have never seen such a sight before, during the twenty years that I have been here as Curé.'

This seems shocking to us to hear of now; but it was probably the state of things in England just before the Reformation, which the Church then struggled to amend. Biel¹ says that a layman is only bound to communicate once a year, and at death, and that not by our Lord's own command, but by the law of the Church. He does not accept our Lord's words as a law, being led by the denial

¹ *De Canone Missæ*, Lectio lxxxvii. lit. x. fo. 237, ed. 1542: 'De Communione laicorum immo generaliter fidelium rationis usum habentium dicitur secundum Alexandrum quod non tenetur nisi ex mandato Ecclesiæ semel in anno: et in articulo mortis. . . . Verba vero Christi quæ in præceptum sonare videntur, *Nisi manducaveritis*, &c., intelliguntur de manducatione spirituali: ut supra dictum est.' In a volume of sermons printed at Hagenau in 1513, it is said on Maundy Thursday, 'In primitivâ Ecclesiâ omnes fideles singulis diebus communicabant; postea communicabant dominicis diebus tantum. Postea statutum est quod *solus sacerdos sumit in personâ omnium*.'—Sermo lxxiv. R. They are called *Sermones Parati*.

of the Cup to the laity to explain spiritually the command, 'Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of man, and *drink His Blood*, ye have no life in you.'

It is much to be feared that the action of those priests in the Church of England, who are spoken of on all sides as insisting on Fasting Communion as a necessity, even under pain of committing mortal sin, will (if not checked) issue in some such neglect of communicating, as was the rule before the Reformation, and obtains in some foreign countries now. If it be true that some of these rigorist priests have refused to communicate invalids, because the medical man had directed food to be taken every two hours,¹ and have distressed devout aged persons by saying they were committing a mortal sin by supporting their enfeebled nature with a little food before communicating—if this be true (and the evidence is too strong to be doubted), it is clearly advisable that some enquiry should be made into the grounds of this teaching.

Now there are three grounds taken up by those who are said to be teaching thus. The first is, greater reverence to the Sacrament; the second is, the obligation of the canons of the Church; and the third is, the assimilation of our rule to that of other Churches. The main object² of this essay is to enquire into the obligation of canons on this subject; but a little may be said, by way of introduction and in the course of the enquiry, on the other two heads.

With respect to greater reverence to the Sacrament.

¹ One such, after refraining from Communion for some time, becoming greatly distressed, persuaded a priest to celebrate at a quarter before one in the morning. Thus the 'natural fast' was observed, though food had been taken within an hour of the act of Communion. The inevitable exhaustion of the sick was disregarded. Surely this could not have been 'a reasonable service.' This is no isolated case.

² I heard in private that I was supposed to have shirked the argument from the Fathers; in this edition, therefore, much care has been devoted to the discussion of all known passages from the Fathers which seem at all to bear on the subject. The object has been to make the historical investigation as thorough as possible.

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All physical and physiological questions should be out of question here, for all men are not constituted alike, and all men have not the same ideas of reverence. It may please some to argue that, because digestion goes on much more rapidly when the work of day in brain or body is proceeding than during sleep, therefore a man is in reality more fasting at twelve o'clock in the day after a light breakfast than he would be at six o'clock in the morning after a heavy supper. But this convinces no one who feels bound by the technical law that a man who is to celebrate or communicate must be fasting from the middle of the preceding night. For such a man would feel at liberty to celebrate or communicate soon after midnight, though he had supped a short time before; since, as Merati observes in his notes on Gavanti,¹ 'Strictly speaking, there is nothing to hinder a priest from celebrating on Christmas night, though he have eaten just before midnight.' Then, again, English ideas of reverence are at present different from those of foreigners. Foreign canonists² say that neither snuff, nor smoking, nor chewing tobacco breaks the fast of the priest about to celebrate; whereas to wash out the mouth, or to suck an aromatic capsule to remove the adventitious stench, would be forbidden. Indeed, if a priest feels it necessary to wash his face before celebrating, he must be careful to keep his lips shut, lest any water should enter his mouth and mix with his saliva. To English minds, or at all events to English senses,³ there is

¹ Gavanti, *Thesaurus Sac. Rituum cum Additionibus C. M. Merati*, Venetiis, 1769, tom. i. p. 235. *Comm. in Rubricas Missalis Romani*, pars iv. tit. iii. § 12.

² Gavanti, *Thesaurus*, tom. i. p. 211. *Quarti Commentaria in Rubricas Missalis*, Venetiis, 1727, pars iii. tit. iv. § 4, p. 371.

³ It is satisfactory to find that in Mexico the use of tobacco before celebration is prohibited by the canons of several councils. One in Peru condemns the custom in strong language: 'In concilio Limensi prohibetur sub reatu pena aeternae damnationis Presbyteri celebraturis ne tabaci pulverem naribus etiam prætectu medicinae ante Sacri icipium sumant.'—*Theologia Practica*, auct. D. Nicolao Pauwels, pars ii. p. 463; Lovanii, 1716.

a perception of lack of reverence in the odour of tobacco being breathed in the face of fasting communicants: and it might be thought that acquired foulness of breath should be avoided as much as anything else. It might almost be said that real piety was at a low ebb, when reverence must depend upon the dicta of physiological professors.

But, apart from this, ideas of reverence are very various. If at some times it be thought necessary out of reverence for the Sacrament to receive fasting, it was thought at other times equally necessary to receive, on Maundy Thursday at least, after a banquet or Maundy. This custom, best known as popular in North Africa, is yet heard of in Phrygia, Constantinople, Gaul, and Spain; and it does not seem to have been finally discontinued till the end of the seventh century.¹ Indeed the discontinuance of the custom is distinctly stated to be out of reverence for Lent rather than from reverence for the Sacrament; though in Spain it was forbidden because of the abuse of the custom by the Priscillianists.

Now it must be remembered that in our northern climate there is a greater demand upon the resources of the body for heat than in southern climates;² and often distress of body, in those who are not quite hardy and strong, prevents what is of chief importance—reverence of mind. So that, if real reverence be desired, some are compelled to obviate extreme distraction and anxiety by some slight partaking of food.³ For it is clear that, if our service

¹ See below, part ii. chap. i. § 5.

² See an excellent little pamphlet on *The Church's Rule of Fasting considered in its Medical Aspect*, by George Cowell, F.R.C.S., Surgeon to the Westminster Hospital. London: Church Printing Company.

³ Thus John Johnson wrote, 'There are many who cannot communicate fasting without great uneasiness and indevotion, unless they go directly from their bed to the altar; and these men must indulge the cravings of an inferior nature, so far as to quiet their spirits and preserve a due attention of mind in the service of God; . . . and, indeed, we of this northern climate are vain if we pretend to imitate the old Eastern, African, or Italian Churches in their fastings. Our air is much more severe than theirs,' &c. See the whole passage below, at the end of the Essay.

of God is to be rational and spiritual, and not merely bodily and external, then reverence of reason and spirit must be of more importance than mere reverence of body, unless there is some definite command of God or man compelling the conscience to the contrary. Now all who are worthy of attention agree that there is no Divine command¹ binding the conscience to Fasting Communion; almost all agree that there is a Divine command to receive Communion; and all must agree that there is a Divine command to worship especially in spirit and in truth. It follows that recollectedness of mind and devout reverence of spirit must be of more importance than accidental disposition of body.

Therefore, without discussing the material questions of physiology (which, though shocking to some, are useful to others) about the action of the saliva in the mastication of the element, or the period of duration of digestion, it may be concluded that if the feeble, or aged, or sick find their minds distressed by a fasting body, they do not otherwise than well in taking some small portion of food to quiet the distress of body.² For, as Mr. Poyntz has well said, 'The

¹ Thus Biel, discussing the exceptions to this rule of Fasting Communion, shows that if a priest by inadvertence have consecrated and consumed water and so have broken the natural fast, he is bound to repair his error and perform the proper act of consecration. He sums up thus: 'Ex una enim parte habet sacerdos præceptum Christi: ut scilicet sanguinem consecret post corporis consecrationem: habet et districtum Ecclesie præceptum de percipiendo consecratum. Ex alia autem parte non habet nisi leve præceptum Ecclesie comparative, scilicet de jejuniis' (Biel, *De Canone Missæ*, Lectio x. lit. d. fo. 14, ed. 1542). He also argues that the priest is not fasting when he communicates on Good Friday: 'In die Parasceves particula posita in calicem percipitur cum vino non consecrato. Et verisimile est quod vinum citius descendat in ventrem quam illa particula: ergo ex consuetudine Ecclesie sacerdos percipit Eucharistiam non jejunus.'

² I am allowed to record the following anecdote of the gentle Bishop Burgess of Salisbury. He was himself in the habit of communicating fasting, and explained his custom to one who remarked on his not taking breakfast. But when the natural reply came, 'If it is right for you it is right for me,' he immediately answered, 'I lay my commands on you never to attempt it: you are not strong, and come of not robust parents, and it would be impossible for you to practise it, and wrong for you to try to do so.'

highest reverence that can be paid is that it should be received by a devout and earnest Christian.¹ Anything that disturbs devotion and earnestness detracts from due reverence.

The third ground relied on is the necessity of assimilating our rule to that of other Churches, with especial view to future union. May God in His mercy grant that union which all Christians must long for! But it may be doubted whether any course of action which is likely to hinder many from the Sacrament of Union in England would be likely to forward union. The rigour of Fasting Communion has been variously relaxed in various places. The communicating after a Maundy hindered not the union of North Africa with Rome and Constantinople.² The Egyptians who communicated every Saturday after supper were not out of Communion with other Churches. The refusal of the Mechlin and Roman rituals to allow Communion to the sick who had broken the 'natural' fast (except by way of viaticum to the moribund³) hindered not union with Cambray, where the *Manuale* allowed the sick, who were unable to remain fasting, to communicate often in the same illness. Gabriel Biel⁴ argues that by the

¹ *The Fast before Communion*, by Rev. Newdigate Poyntz; London, Palmer, 1872, p. 6.

² Socrates, the ecclesiastical historian, has a chapter on the varieties of customs. It is of great value as showing how the widest variation in practice and discipline did not hinder intercommunion.—Socrates, *Hist.* bk. v. chap. 22. The chapter is given below, part iii. chapter xiii.

³ Van Espen, *Jus Ecclesiasticum Universum*, pars ii. § 1, tit. iv. cap. iv. § 6; Lovanii, 1753, tom. i. p. 404.

⁴ See the passage quoted in a previous note. Some, it is true, have contended that the presence of the presanctified particle is sufficient to consecrate the common wine and water. In the *Ordo Romanus* it is said, 'Sanctificatur vinum non consecratum per sanctificatum panem' (ap. Hittorpium Romæ, 1591, p. 49, B. So also Alcuin, *Id.* p. 50, A). Micrologus also (*Id.* p. 388, B) in chap. 19, says, 'In Parasceve vinum non consecratum cum Dominica oratione et Dominici Corporis immissione jubet consecrare.' But this is directly opposed to the rule which requires the priest not to take the ablutions before a second mass, since they are not consecrated by the *reliquia*, and would break his fast. It is argued out in the glosses on Gratian, and decided 'Evacuatur opinio quæ dicit quod quicquid Sanguini Christi commiscetur Sanguis est.'—*De Cons.* dist. 1,

precept of the Church the priest does not communicate fasting on Good Friday; for he takes the presanctified particle in common wine, and as the wine is at once taken up by the system, the natural fast is broken when he communicates. Is it possible to suppose that Pope Leo III., an old man,¹ could have habitually performed his seven or nine Masses a day without some portion of food taken before some of them? Must we suppose that children going to or coming from school were absolutely fasting from the previous midnight when they were taken into Church to consume the remainder of the consecrated elements, as was done at Constantinople and at Mâcon? or if it be argued that Christian children might have been fasting, was the Hebrew child fasting to whom a portion was given as recorded by Evagrius and others?²

But the giving the Cup to the laity, pronounced a *heresy* by the Council of Constance, is quite as likely to hinder union in the West as the relaxation of the rule of Fasting Communion; for those who are not able to communicate fasting have not yet been called heretics openly.³ It may not be well to give up much in prospect of problematical success.

With excellent intention Mr. Poyntz⁴ has learnedly argued that it is within the power of each diocesan Bishop to grant a dispensation from this fast, which therefore should be sought at his hands. If the argument of this essay is correct, there is no law binding in England to

cap. Sufficit, § Et alteram. Extra de Cel. Mis. Ex parte. *Decretum*, col. 1904; *Decretales*, col. 1367; Lugduni, 1606. Durandus (Rationale, lib. vi. cap. 75) says the wine is not consecrated but is hallowed (sanctificari).

¹ 'Fidelium relatione virorum in nostram usque pervenit notitiam, Leonem papam sicut ipse fatebatur una die vii vel ix missarum solemnias sæpius celebrasse' (Walafrid Strabo, *De Rebus Ecclesiasticis*, cap. xxi.). Leo III. died A.D. 816, and Walafrid was made Abbot of Reichenau in A.D. 842.

² Evagrius, *Hist. Eccl.* lib. iv. cap. xxxvi. Nicephorus, lib. xvii. cap. xxv. St. Gregory of Tours, *De Gloria Martyrum*, lib. i. cap. x.

³ Sala indeed thinks 'ut hæc opinio error in fide censeri debeat.'—Bona, *Opera Liturgica*, vol. ii. p. 109, note, 1749.

⁴ *The Fast before Communion*, Palmer, 1872.

require the fast, and so no English diocesan bishop would grant a dispensation if asked to do so. If we accept the dicta of foreign canonists as our own, and say, for the sake of some nearer prospect of union, that the law of fasting is to be regarded as binding in England, then the suggestion of Mr. Poyntz does not help us; for he seems to have overlooked or ignored the fact that the same extern authorities¹ say that none but the Pope himself can grant the dispensation. True, Charles V. never received fasting, but then he had a running dispensation from Pope Julius III.

When the arrogant pride of the exclusive Ultramontane is lowered, so as to render union possible, it will not be impossible to lessen any difficulty on this score by requiring a dispensation, if necessary. Until this blessed consummation be arrived at, it may be doubted whether a sudden attempt at rigour will not do more harm than good. Violent language about 'mortal sin' is too easily used; it may attract attention to subjects too long neglected, but it often wounds earnest Christians, shocks those who are growing in the faith, and imperils the health of souls. It is therefore earnestly to be deprecated.

We must now try to see what is the law of the Church. But there is one great difficulty which we have to meet in dealing with questions of this kind. We are too apt to carry our modern views with us when we search into antiquity. Some carry into the writings and sayings of antiquity a meaning which they will not bear. There are, indeed, two ways of approaching an ancient author. A man may previously make up his mind what the writer must have meant, and then try to convey to the words he used the preconceived meaning. Or a man may try to find out what the words used must have meant at the time,

¹ *Summa Summarum*, ab R. P. Silvestro Prierate Lugduni, 1551, p. 346, s.v. Eucharistia III. § viii. P. M. Quarti *Commentaria in Rubricas Missalis*, Venetiis, 1727, pp. 13 and 377.

and then come to the conclusion that the writer must have meant what he said. Too many writers, whether controversialist or not, have adopted the former method, which is distinctly most liable to error;¹ but it has been the endeavour in this essay to adhere to the latter plan.

It is worth while to give one or two examples of the erroneous method which have reference in some way to the matter of this treatise. The first example is that of a mistake, which is all the more mischievous from the great and deserved popularity of the book and its author. It is taken from Miss Yonge's capital '*Book of Golden Deeds*,' and is from a description of the rescue of a young nobleman from slavery by his grandfather's negro slave.²

That same night the two faint, hungry, weary travellers, foot-sore and exhausted, came stumbling into Rheims, looking about for some person still awake to tell them the way to the house of the priest Paul, a friend of Attalus' uncle. They found it just as the church bell was ringing for matins, a sound that must have seemed very much like home to these members of an episcopal household. They knocked, and in the morning twilight met the priest going to his earliest Sunday morning service. Leo told his young master's name, and how they had escaped; and the priest's first exclamation was a strange one, 'My dream is true! This very night I saw two doves, one white and one black, who came and perched on my hand.' The good man was overjoyed, *but he scrupled to give them any food, as it was contrary to the Church's rules for the fast to be broken before Mass*; but the travellers were half-dead with hunger, and could only say, 'The good Lord pardon us, for, saving the respect due to His day, we must eat something, since this is the fourth day since we have touched bread or meat.' The priest upon this gave them some bread and wine, and after hiding them carefully went to church, hoping to avert suspicion.

This account is very remarkable; for this is not a

¹ St. Jerome complains of this, '*Et quisquam tam iniquus lector erit, ut non ex meis dictis, sed ex suo me sensu judicet?*'—Ep. xlviii. ad Pammachium, Verona, 1734, tom. i. col. 212.

² *A Book of Golden Deeds*, by Charlotte M. Yonge, 1864, p. 120. A most delightful and edifying book.

case of men who wished to communicate or celebrate Mass, but of two men who wished to hide. It is asserted as a broad rule, that no food was to be taken before the hour of Mass by anyone whatsoever. The priest was going to matins about three o'clock A.M., and Mass would not be said until six hours later. If therefore, in the sixth century, we find a priest scrupling to give runaways who were starving any food on a Sunday morning six hours before Mass was said, it would be a remarkable thing indeed. But when we turn to the original story as told by St. Gregory of Tours in his most amusing and interesting history, then, lo and behold, the scruple of the priest, the desire for pardon on the part of the runaways, and the reason for both, all vanish together, and the narrative, shorn of its adventitious matter, is more easy of acceptance. The original and a literal translation are placed side by side:—

Hi autem nocte ipsâ ad-
gerunt ad urbem ingressique
invenerunt hominem, quem
sciscitati sunt, ubinam esset
domus Paulellii presbyteri: indi-
cavitque eis. Qui dum per pla-
team præteriret, signum ad matu-
tinas motum est: erat enim dies
Dominica. Pulsantesque ja-
nuam presbyteri, ingressi sunt.
Exposuitque puer de domino
suo. Cui ait presbyter, 'Vera
est enim visio mea! nam vide-
bam duas in hac nocte columbas
advolare et consedere in manu
mea: ex quibus una alba, alia
autem nigra erat.' Dixeruntque
pueri presbytero, 'Indulgeat
Dominus² pro die suâ sanctâ!

But that very night they
reached the city, and as they
entered they found a man, whom
they asked where the house of
Paulellius the priest was: and
he showed them. But as he
was passing along the street, the
bell went for matins, for it was
Sunday. They knocked at the
door of the priest and went in.
And the slave told who his
master was. To whom the
priest says, 'Well, then, my
dream is true! for I saw to-
night two doves fly to me and
settle down on my hand: of
which one was white, and one
was black.' And the youths
said to the priest, 'The Lord

¹ *Gregorii Turonensis Historie Francorum*, lib. iii. cap. xv. Paris, 1561, p. 136; Parisiis, 1699, col. 121.

² It has been acutely suggested that the real meaning of this is, 'Please, sir, be good to us for this your holy day's sake!'

Nam nos rogamus ut aliquid victui præbeas; quarta enim inlucescit dies, quod nihil panis pulmentique gustavimus.' Occultatis autem pueris, præbuit eis infusum cum vino panem, et abiit ad matutinas.

vouchsafe it for his holy day's sake! For *we* ask you to give us something to eat; for the fourth day is now dawning that we have tasted no bread or meat.' When therefore he had hidden the youths, he gave them bread sopped in wine, and went to matins.

Here we have a wonderful instance of 'farsed' history; and the 'farsura,' or force-meat, all arises from a misconception of the word *indulgeat*. In later Latin this would certainly mean *pardon*, therefore it must mean this here. But a difficulty arises because there is nothing in the story, as given by St. Gregory, which makes sense if *indulgeat* be translated 'pardon.' Therefore into the narrative there must be inserted an interpolation to force the sense. Inventive genius is set to work, and some imaginary scruples of the priest and pleading on the part of the runaways have to be introduced to make the tale run smoothly. The truth is that the meaning of *pardon* had not yet become appropriated to *indulgeo*, and St. Gregory rarely uses the word in this sense. In order to ascertain this beyond reasonable doubt, I have read all St. Gregory's works as given in the Benedictine edition, with the following result. I find I have noted down thirty-two places besides the present where 'indulgeo' is used, and in only four¹ of them does it

¹ St. Gregory's works, though very interesting, are not very commonly found in private libraries, so the context of these four passages is here given. Where a *page* is given in the references to St. Gregory, it cites the Paris edition of the *Historia Francorum* of 1561; the *column* refers to the Benedictine edition of the works of St. Gregory, Paris, 1699. The four passages with the sense of *pardon* attached to *indulgeo* are the following:—*Hist. Francorum*, lib. ix. cap. viii. p. 494, col. 426: 'Rogo ut indulgeatis malis meis quæ contra vos gessi'—I ask you to pardon the wrongs I have done you: of a man imploring pardon from a king and a queen-mother. *De Gloria Martyrum*, lib. i. cap. lxxviii. col. 809: 'Indulge injuriam hujus delicti'—excuse the wrong of this fault: a duke asks pardon of a pious archdeacon who had been ignominiously maltreated by his servants who had mistaken orders. *Id.* lib. i. ap. lx xv. col. 821: 'Ne crimen indultum iteraretur ulterius'—lest the crime

certainly mean *pardon*, and in these the context is unmistakable. Once we get the clue to the step by which it came to mean 'pardon,' for we find the phrase *indulgere veniam*.¹ The common meaning of the word is much the same as the idea conveyed in English by the word 'indulge;' that is, it means granting with a certain amount of favour or condescension some request which the petitioner had no antecedent claim to expect would be granted. Thus we find the word used thirteen times² of some benefit or mercy vouchsafed by God; five times of granting some petition or request: sometimes it has the simple meaning of being kind to anyone; sometimes it is giving some present with a sense of favour or great need on the part of the receiver:³ twice it is used of indulging in sleep;⁴ while

which had been pardoned should be repeated again: the reason given by St. Gregory for the sudden death of a woman who, convinced of her sin by the Jordan retreating from her feet, confessed aloud that she had murdered her eight illegitimate children, and asked the people assembled to pray for her. *Vita Patrum*, cap. vi. § 4, col. 1172: 'Cuncta quæ locutus est clementer indulget'—he kindly excused all he had said: St. Galle forgives a priest who had reviled him. Another instance may be perhaps found in *Historia Francorum*, lib. v. cap. xxxix. p. 277. Remark in only one of these is the word used of pardon from God for sin committed; the other instances are of overlooking or excusing faults against a superior.

¹ *De Glorâ Confessorum*, Præfatio, col. 893.

² In these it is generally used of some miracle. The following are the passages:—*Hist. Francorum*, lib. i. cap. xiii. p. 14: 'Quod peteret ut indulgeat pollicetur'—God promises to grant Solomon what he asked. *Id.* lib. i. cap. xiv. p. 15, col. 16: 'Salubrem effectum indulgeat.' *Id.* lib. ii. cap. xxx. p. 93: 'Si mihi victoriam induleris.' *Id.* lib. x. cap. ult.: 'Munus divinitus indultum.' *De Glorâ Confess.* cap. xlvii. col. 933: 'Multa indulgeri beneficia.' *De Glo. Martyrum*, lib. i. cap. lxxi. col. 801: 'Munus indultum divinitus.' *Vita Patrum*, cap. v. col. 1164: 'Quanta Deus indulgeat.' *Id.* cap. x. col. 1205: 'Incrementum a Te indultum.' *Id.* cap. xi. col. 1209: 'Lymphas sibi divinitus indultas.' *Id.* cap. xix. col. 1244: 'Charismata cœlitus indulta.' *Id.*: 'Miracula quotidianis indulta momentis.' *Id.* col. 1246: 'Ut alimentum dignaretur indulgere.' And the passage in present question, *Hist. Franc.* lib. iii. cap. xv. p. 137.

³ For example, a bishop was being conveyed close prisoner somewhither, and when the boat in which he was being carried stopped at a certain town, the bishop of the place came to see and console him, and went away 'indulgens aliquid vestimenti,' giving him some clothes.

⁴ *De Miraculis St. Juliani*, cap. xxxvii. col. 877: 'Ut modico sopore indul-

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the noun 'indulgentia' is used once with a sense of per-
mission,¹ once with the meaning of acceptance, and once of
the king's favour.

If then the word *indulgeat* alone be regarded, there is
every probability of its not meaning 'pardon' in this pas-
sage; and as there is nothing in the context to warrant
this meaning, it is impossible that it should in this instance
bear this interpretation. But when the words 'pro die suâ
sanctâ' are taken into consideration, it makes the impossi-
bility of the paraphrase given by Miss Yonge all the more
apparent. The simple phrase has to be rendered, 'Saving the
respect due to His holy day,' a meaning which can scarcely
be tortured out of the words. They simply mean 'for His
holy day's sake.'

The meaning of the passage is sufficiently clear to
make it surprising that such a strange interpretation should
have been foisted in. The trembling runaways were eager
to obtain food and refuge, and they seize upon the priest's
dream as an argument in their favour. The priest said
the doves flew to him and *settled* on his hand, settled down
as it were to roost. A heathen might have exclaimed,
'Accipio omen' or something of that sort, but the Christians
say, 'God grant it for His holy day's sake.' The priest no
doubt ran a great risk in hiding runaway slaves, but they
plead the sacredness of the day in their favour, and the
moment the priest says, 'My dream is true,' they cry out,
'God grant it!' if it be not 'Please, sir, be good to us.'

It is true that Miss Yonge is not wholly answerable for
the mistake, as she does little more than translate Thierry²
(to whom she herself refers), who works up into his narrative

gentur.' *De Mir. St. Martini*, lib. i. cap. ii. col. 1003 : 'Corpori quietem
indulserat.'

¹ *De Glo. Mar.* lib. i. cap. lxx. col. 800 : 'Acceptâ indulgentiâ'—leave
being received. *De Mir. St. Martini*, lib. iii. cap. lx. col. 1112. *Historia
Francorum*, lib. v. cap. xviii. p. 250.

² *Lettres sur l'Histoire de France*, par Augustin Thierry. Ed. 7, Paris
1842, Lettre viii. p. 138.

a note of the Benedictine editors. But these latter have edited this particular work in a controversial rather than a critical spirit, as is observable elsewhere in the work. For instance, in the story as told by St. Gregory of the Jewish boy being communicated, and afterwards saved in his father's furnace by the special intervention of the Blessed Virgin herself, the editors draw attention to the fact that the boy speaks only of receiving bread,¹ from which they argue in favour of reception under one species only; but when there is special mention of a woman receiving the Chalice as if it were the ordinary custom, the editors make no remark.²

There is not to be found elsewhere in the writings of St. Gregory any proof that 'it was contrary to the Church's rule for the fast to be broken before Mass,' in the manner assumed. True we read of a terrible fate befalling a priest who ventured to consecrate when drunken, or 'sodden with wine.'³ We also read of a deacon who was blinded⁴ be-

¹ *Greg. Turon. Opera*, Parisiis, 1699, col. 732; *De Glorid Martyrum*, lib. i. cap. x. It was the reserved sacrament (called the Body and Blood of the Lord) which was given to the boy, and there is abundant evidence that the habit then was the same as it is in the Liturgy of the Presanctified with the Greeks now. The species of bread was imbued with the consecrated wine, which was then allowed to dry. The moistening with unconsecrated wine, which is constantly spoken of, was not merely to assist deglutition, but was to revive the moisture of the liquid species. Cf. *Euseb. Hist. Eccl.* lib. vi. cap. xlv.; Co. Carthag. IV. can. lxxvi. [A.D. 398]; Co. Matiscon II. can. vi. [A.D. 585]. For the Greek custom see Leo Allatius, *De Missâ Præsanctificatorum*, a treatise printed at the end of his work *De Ecclesiæ Consensu*, Colonise Agrippinæ, 1648, col. 1537; Neale, *History of the Eastern Church*, Introduction, p. 718, London, 1850. For the Latin use, compare the gloss on Gratian III. *De Consecr.* Dist. iii. cap. xciii.: 'Eucharistiam licet intinctam dare causâ necessitatis.' This of the reserved Sacrament. It was forbidden to give it intinct in Church; cf. Co. Bracarense III. can. i. [A.D. 675]; Co. Claramont, can. xxviii. [A.D. 1094]. It may be that this custom of reserving a host dipped in the Chalice was the origin of the reception of a presanctified particle in common wine and water by the priest on Good Friday in the Western Church. Micrologus has a chapter (xix.) *De Vitandâ Intinctione*, ap. Hittorpium, Romæ, 1591, p. 388 B.

² *De Glorid Confessorum*, cap. lxxv. col. 947.

³ *De Glorid Martyrum*, lib. i. cap. lxxxvii. col. 819.

⁴ *De Miraculis St. Martini*, lib. iii. cap. xxxviii. col. 1100.

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cause he neglected *matins*, to entertain with a social cup a friend whom he met as he was going to church. Again, an abbot is introduced ¹ excusing himself from drinking in a king's tent by pleading that he had not yet sung his appointed psalms.² But *matins* were the private prayers of the clergy, and it would be rather as if a man said, 'I will not take any breakfast till I have said my prayers.' The question even here is not before Mass, but before *matins*. It must be remembered that *matins* were said some six hours before Mass,³ and that the clergy used to go to bed again after *matins*. In one instance a layman,⁴ a labourer, who had given lodging to a priest, got up to go to work in the very early morning, and called to his wife for his 'jentaculum,' or early morning food. The priest was awake saying his *matins*, and the good labourer would not begin to eat before the priest had given him his blessing. This was of advantage to him later on in the day; for he heard evil spirits lamenting that they could not attack him because he was protected by the priest's blessing. This shows the very natural feeling that some religious act was most advantageous before bodily necessities were attended to, but it does not show that there was a general rule that none should eat before Mass at nine o'clock.

But if we must be careful how we impose our own sense upon a passage, so also must we take heed how we allow ourselves to argue *à posteriori* in respect of time. When Dr. Pusey is giving a passage from St. Chrysostom ⁵ which speaks of a celebration in the evening, he appends a

¹ *Vita Patrum*, cap. v. col. 1166.

² By a canon of the Council of Mentz, can. lvii. [A.D. 813], no clerk might be absent from *matins*, except when sick, under pain of excommunication for seven days for each offence.—*Summa Conciliorum*, Carranza, Parisiis, 1668, p. 563; cf. Co. Bracensis II. can. lxiii. Bruns, ii. p. 55.

³ The clergy were not to take the *grandium* before 9 A.M., i.e. the hour of Mass. It does not follow they might not take the *jentaculum* at 4 A.M. Cf. Co. Bracarense II. can. lkv. Bruns, part ii. p. 55.

⁴ *De Gloria Confessorum*, cap. xxxi. col. 919.

⁵ *The Doctrine of the Real Presence*, p. 556, note 4.

note of time which seems now most natural, 'Easter Eve.' He does not support this by any argument, and there is nothing in the sermon to make it certain. The Greeks thought the sermon was preached on the festival of the Holy Cross in September; but the Benedictine editors, with truer criticism, show from internal evidence that it was preached on Good Friday.¹

Another curious instance of attaching to the words of antiquity a sense which they will not bear is to be found in the manner in which the sixth canon of the second council of Macon has been interpreted. The latter part of the canon runs as follows: ²—

Quæcunque reliquæ sacrificiorum post peractam missam in sacrario supersederint, quarta vel sexta feria innocentes ab illo cuius interest ad Ecclesiam adducantur, et indicto eis jejunio easdem reliquias conspersas vino percipiant.

The exact rendering of which is:—

Whatever residue of the sacrifices remain over in the sacrarium after celebration of Mass, let children be brought to the church, on Wednesday or Friday, by him whose business it is, and a fast having been enjoined them, let them receive the same residue with wine poured over.

There is not much difficulty here if none be introduced from without. The 'indicto jejunio' would refer to the fast after Communion, as the position of the words would imply. But Dr. Falkner³ represents the meaning thus:—

The council of Mascon (*Conc. Matis. II. c. vi.*) directed them [i.e. the residue] to be given in church to such Christians as kept their fasts there on the fourth and sixth days of the week.

¹ 'Non enim in festo Sanctæ Crucis quæ in Septembrem incidit, quæque nondum illo ævo celebrabatur, hanc habuit homiliam Chrysostomus, sed in die Parasceves, eadem nempe qua crucifixus est Dominus, ut ipse in plurimis locis declarat.'—Admonitio in Homiliam de Coemeterio et de Cruce, *St. Chrysostomi Opera*, Parisiis, tom. ii. p. 396.

² Co. Matiscon II. can. vi. Bruns, tom. ii. p. 251.

³ *Libertas Ecclesiastica*; or a discourse vindicating the lawfulness of those things which are chiefly excepted against in the Church of England, by William Falkner, D.D., fourth edition, London, 1683, p. 226.

Bingham¹ too was not free from the same bias, for he renders the words in this manner :—

If any remains of the Sacrifice after the service was ended were laid up in the vestry, he who had the care of them should, on Wednesday or Friday, bring the innocents to Church, fasting, and then, sprinkling the remains with wine, make them all partake of them.

These interpretations are scarcely tenable. The syntax requires that *indicto jejunio* be subsequent to the bringing to Church. The phrase is not unknown in contemporary writers to express the proclaiming or imposing an unusual fast for a particular occasion.² The sprinkling with wine was to moisten the species of wine which had been dried on the other species for the purpose of reservation :³ there is no ground here for the argument of Bossuet and other Roman Catholics, that there is here an allusion to Communion under one species.

Again, it is always well to compare the context of passages which are quoted, in order to be certified of their sense. That giant of authority and accuracy of thought, St. Thomas Aquinas, himself has not escaped error from neglecting this rule. No other explanation can be given of the following mistake. He is alleging the famous African canon which excepts Maundy Thursday from its rule of Fasting Communion, and he recites the objection :⁴ 'Therefore on that day at least a man can take the Body of Christ after other food.' To this objection he thinks it a sufficient answer to quote St. Augustine's letter,

¹ *Antiquities*, bk. xv. chap. vii. § 4.

² Thus St. Gregory of Tours, who was present at the second Council of Mâcon, uses the phrase telling how an imminent danger was averted : 'Propterea concurrentes populi ad basilicam Sancti indictis jejuniis vigiliis celebrant, mox salvantur.'—*Liber de Gloria Confessorum*, cap. xlv. Parisiis, 1699, col. 932 A. See also *Hist. Francorum*, lib. ii. cap. xxxiv. col. 90, &c.

³ See above, note on p. 14.

⁴ St. Thomas, *Summa*, pars iii. questio lxxx. art. viii. § 3, Venetiis, 1757, toin. v. p. 546, col. 1.

written three years after the third Council of Carthage, which re-enacted this canon, at which he was probably present, and at which he had considerable influence.

But *now* this has been abrogated ; FOR, as Augustine says, this custom is held throughout the whole world, i. e. that the Body of Christ should be taken by the fasting.

Yet as a matter of fact St. Augustine takes the Commemorative Supper on Maundy Thursday for granted, and does not argue for or against it. Not only does he *not* say that it is abrogated, but he says not one word against it, but rather the contrary. The point under discussion is whether a man might or might not take the *prandium* or morning meal, and so break the *Lenten* fast on Maundy Thursday.¹ The following is the sense of the passage, which is obscure, if not corrupt :—

Some persons fancy that on the anniversary of the day when the Lord held the Last Supper it should be lawful to offer and receive the Body and Blood of the Lord after food, as if for a more striking commemoration. Now I think that this celebration had better be at such an hour, that a man may keep the Lenten fast by not taking luncheon, and still communicate after food by coming to the oblation after the three o'clock meal. There is therefore no compulsion in the African canon to take luncheon before that Maundy, though it is not forbidden.

It is impossible to think that St. Thomas can have read this, which is the immediate context of the passage which he quotes, for it is directly contrary to the meaning for which he quotes it. It would almost seem (though it is hard to believe) that St. Thomas only knew the passage in the extract given by Gratian.

A somewhat similar error has been made by Gavanti² in his commentary on the rubrics of the Missal. He says

¹ See the whole passage discussed at length below, part iii. chapter xii.

² *Comment. in Rubricas Missalis*, pars iii. tit. ix. : *Thesaurus Sacrorum Rituum*, Venetiis, 1769, tom. i. p. 210.

that this rule of fasting 'emanates from the Apostles. Clement (Ep. ii.) says that he received it from St. Peter.' Now first of all, in the Second Epistle of Clement, the fast spoken of is the fast *after* Communion, and not the so-called natural fast from midnight. This, as St. Thomas himself says, 'has been abrogated by the contrary custom, because it could not be easily observed.' Next, the epistle itself is a very poor forgery, interpolated by the pseudo-Isidore, and therefore is not a powerful argument that a custom therein spoken of emanates from the Apostles. Gavanti could scarcely have verified his reference in this case.

Nor indeed could Giustiniani¹ have verified his references when he cited St. Basil's letter 'ad Cæsaream Patriciam' as upholding Fasting Communion. For there is not one word about this in the letter from beginning to end, as anyone may see if he will read the letter which is given at length below, in the chapter on St. Basil.

It is difficult, however, to explain such a mistake as the following, which occurs in a note by the editor of St. Chrysostom's Sermons on the Statues in the Oxford Library of the Fathers.² The peculiarity of the passage is that the editor goes out of his way to correct John Johnson, and writes himself down ungrammatical.

The Holy Communion was always received fasting. On this point it may be worth while to correct a mistake of Johnson in his 'Clergyman's Vade-Mecum,' part ii. p. 214, ed. 1709. He gives thus the sixteenth canonical answer of Timothy, bishop of Alexandria A.D. 380, Bev. Pand. ii. 169, &c. 'If a man [when fasting in order to communicate, Gr.] in washing or bathing swallow a drop of water, may he communicate? *A. Yes.*' The answer is really, 'Since the devil hath found occasion to prevent his

¹ In 1 Cor. xi. 20: Benedicti Justiniani Genuensis S. J. In omnes B. Pauli Epistolas Explanat. tom. i. p. 561; Lugduni, 1612.

² The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom on the Statues translated, Oxford, 1842, p. 159, note g. The translation is by Mr. Budge; but the note in question is by the editor of the volume, the Rev. Charles Marriott, Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. The note is referred to in the index to the volume, which shows that it is regarded as important.

communicating, let him do it *oftener*.¹ This plainly implies he is not to do it *then*.

The original and the Latin translation as given by Beveridge¹ in the passage referred to in the note is as follows, from which it will be seen that Mr. Marriott's translation is impossible.

ἐπεὶ εὗρεν ὁ Σατανᾶς ἀφορμὴν τοῦ κωλύειν αὐτὸν τῆς κοινωνίας συχνότερον τοῦτο ποιήσει.	Quia etiam invenit Satanas occasionem prohibendi eum a communione, frequentius hoc faciet.
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In the first edition of his very useful 'Vade-Mecum' Johnson only professed to give the sense of the canons in a summary form: in the later editions, however, he gave them mostly at length, and his version of this answer is sufficiently accurate.³ 'If Satan find an occasion of hindring us from the communion, *he will the oftner do it*;' which distinctly implies that the man is to communicate, the water notwithstanding. It seems a pity that Mr. Marriott attempted to improve upon Johnson with a rendering so strangely divergent from grammatical accuracy.

But when such great names are found to have slipped, I cannot hope to have escaped, especially in a subject which so often breaks up new ground. I had hoped to have had the advantage of severe adverse criticism; but though this was promised more than a year ago, it has never come to my assistance.

¹ This is the text referred to; but in the modern carefully edited *Synagma of Canons*, published at Athens, the answer begins rather differently: *Nai. Ipeì eúrēn ὁ σατανᾶς κ. τ. λ.*—that is, 'Yes; since if Satan have found an occasion,' &c.—*Σύνταγμα κανόνων*, Athens, 1854, vol. iv. p. 341.

³ *The Clergyman's Vade-Mecum*, by John Johnson, M.A., Vicar of Cranbrook, London, 1723, 3rd ed. part ii. p. 254.

PART I.

HOW CANON LAW BINDS

CHAPTER I.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CANONS.

THE authority of the Church to make laws, and to enforce them upon those within her pale, depends upon the commission of our Lord to the first rulers of the Church. There must exist within every society some power to make rules for its well-being and guidance. In the Church this power was first conveyed to St. Peter, and then to all the Apostles by the Lord Himself:¹ the same power was afterwards declared by the Church (under the guidance of the Holy Spirit) to have descended to the successors of the Apostles, the Bishops. 'I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven,' is the commission to St. Peter: then to all the Apostles, 'Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' This power, thus delegated, would include that which was afterwards

¹ St. Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18. Some think that the power was conveyed by the saying, 'Ye shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel' (St. Matt. xix. 28); but this is more appropriately referred to the last judgment, as the Lord says, 'In the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His Glory.'

specially conveyed—viz. the power of remitting and retaining sins : but now there was the further power of legislation and government.

That this power was thus understood at the time to be conveyed would appear from the words used by our Lord to St. Peter ; for here, as elsewhere, the Lord accepts a custom or formula in common use, and incorporates it into His own institution. He commonly adapted to His own use what He found ready to hand in the existing Jewish commonwealth, which had been no doubt divinely guided to adopt that which afterwards would prove useful in the Gospel Kingdom. In His temptation He twice vanquishes Satan with a text from the *Shema*, which as a devout Jew He said twice daily. He appoints chief disciples under Him to be His constant attendants : they are twelve in number, according to the number of the twelve tribes. He calls them Apostles ; a name well known amongst the tribes, as borne by those messengers who were sent to collect the taxes and voluntary offerings of the dispersion to the temple worship. Later on, He appoints others under the twelve : these are seventy in number, according to the number of the council that assisted Moses. He gives a prayer : there is but one clause new. He appoints Sacraments : Baptism was then at all events well known, just after St. John the Baptist ; the Holy Eucharist is allowed on all hands to be the adaptation of some ceremony in common use. One while, He takes a parable from the Rabbis, and sublimates it to His own use ; another while, He takes some well-known formula or proverb, and vivifies and quickens it to bear a deep spiritual meaning. If He gives a form of benediction to His ministers, it is the common form of blessing amongst His countrymen, 'Peace be with you ;' but it is made instinct with quickening grace. If He preaches a sermon, He takes as His text some custom or precept of His own time. If He answers a question as to what was the first and greatest commandment, He refers

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His questioner to the *Shema*, which was said morning and evening. Thus was the Church built on the ruins of the synagogue, though the glory of the latter house was to be far greater than that of the former.

Here, then, in this particular of giving power of internal legislation binding on the conscience of Christians, the Lord adopted a well-known formula amongst the Jews. When one was appointed Rabbi, which was the highest academical degree, there was given him a key to denote that then was given him the power of opening the law by authoritative exposition, and of locking up or releasing the consciences of men. At the same time, we are told,¹ there was said: 'We give to thee power to bind and to loose;' that is, they had power given them to decide in matters of casuistry what was binding and what was not. These decisions became gradually incorporated in books of decrees, and answered very nearly to the canons, just as the Talmud would answer to the *Decretum* of Gratian. In these words, then, probably the power of making canons was conveyed to the Church; first to St. Peter alone, and then to all the Apostles.

This power was exercised by the Apostles. The first council or synod at which they met to issue such decisions was that recorded in Acts xv.; where many Apostles were assembled, and St. James, as Bishop of Jerusalem, presided and summed up. At this council certain canons were decided upon; and succeeding councils or synods seem to have followed the example of this synod at Jerusalem. They were summoned to meet some pressing need, or to decide some urgent question, and they issued such canons as seemed requisite to the occasion.

But, first of all, there has ever been a distinction

¹ Stier, *Words of the Lord Jesus*, ed. Clark, vol. ii. p. 348. Compare also Etheridge's *Hebrew Literature*, p. 54; Lightfoot *On St. Matthew* xvi. 19, vol. ii. p. 205, ed. 1684. To 'bind' was to forbid; to 'loose' to allow.

between councils: some are esteemed, (I.) general; and some, (II.) special or particular.

(I.) General Councils.

The definition of a general council depends upon the views of the one who defines. If he be an ultramontane, he has his own peculiar definition; if he be a cismontane, his definition is different. So, too, the number of general councils varies; but the whole Church is agreed to acknowledge four at least, or six according to some. This is much the same, as the fifth and sixth did practically little more than confirm the canons of the preceding four.¹ It may be convenient to name them:—

1. Council of Nicæa, A.D. 325.
2. " Constantinople I., A.D. 381.
3. " Ephesus, A.D. 431.
4. " Chalcedon, A.D. 451.
5. " Constantinople II., A.D. 553.
6. " Constantinople III., A.D. 680.

Now, if the common cismontane, or Gallican, definition of a general council be taken—viz. (1) one that was general or universal in its convoking; (2) that was free in deliberation; (3) that has been generally or universally received—it will be seen that the determinations of such councils are to be received with the utmost respect.

II. Particular or Special Councils.

These have ever been subdivided by canonists into three classes:—1. *National*, including all bishops within a nation or realm. 2. *Provincial*, including all the bishops in a

¹ It is interesting to read the view taken of this distinction between general and local Synods in the eighth century. The Second Council of Nicæa thus writes: 'By these six holy Synods then (which alone we acknowledge a general) the orthodox faith has been firmly settled, nor do we receive any other Synod besides these. However, we do not reject local Synods, nay rather we love, embrace, and receive them, and honour their divinely-inspired canonical constitutions, corrections, and useful legislations with the utmost observance.'—Co. Nicæn. II. (A.D. 780), actio iii. Carranza, *Summa Conciliorum*, Parisiis, 1668, p. 530.

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province with a metropolitan at their head. 3. *Diocesan*:
a bishop may sit in synod with his chapter.

Particular or local councils may make canons to bind
within the limits of their authority. Thus with us, 'The
Lord Chancellor and the three chief judges declared that,
by the common law of England, every bishop in his
diocese, and the archbishops in convocation, may make
canons to bind within the limits of their jurisdiction.'¹

Sometimes, by general acceptance, the canons of a small
provincial council may become binding even further than
the canons of a general council.

But as the authority for making canons varies, so also
the canons themselves vary. There are canons of faith and
canons of discipline.² Canons of faith, when duly enacted,
can never vary or become obsolete, because the faith is one
and indivisible, at all times and in all places. Directly, there-
fore, a council defines an article of faith, that article or canon
is at once binding within the limits of the jurisdiction of the
council. For a local or particular council may define an
article of faith, subject to the revision of a general council;
and, as a matter of fact, the Nicene faith was affirmed at
several local councils before it was universally declared in
the first general council.

It is not so with a canon of discipline. Discipline may
and does vary with the times, and with places;³ so that
canons of discipline passed by a general council need not

¹ Bishop Stillingfleet, *Ecclesiastical Cases*, vol. i. p. 336, 1698.

² The difference was marked at the Council of Nice, as St. Athanasius has
pointed out in his often-quoted saying, 'They wrote concerning Easter, "It
seemeth good as follows" . . . but about the faith they wrote, not "it seemeth
good," but "thus believes the Catholic Church."' (*Treatises against Arian-
ism*, Oxford Translation, p. 80; *Opera*, Ed. Ben. Paris, 1698, tom. i. pars ii.
p. 719, D.) Similarly, in the first Council of Braga (A.D. 563), it was proposed
'First let us make enquiries about the fundamentals of the Catholic faith;
next let the rules of the Fathers be made known by reading the canons;
lastly, let matters affecting obedience to God or the clerical office be carefully
discussed.'—Bruns, *Canones*, ii. p. 29.

³ So Leo Allatius, 'De Ecclesiæ occidentalis et orientalis perpetua consen-
sione,' lib. iii. cap. xlii. § 17; Colonæ Agrippinæ, 1648, col. 1161.

bind everywhere,¹ nor need they bind the conscience at all times: for the manners of different places vary, and so also the manners of different times; and variation of manners would require variation of discipline.

¹ St. Augustine points out that Christians in his day did not abstain from things strangled, though this had been insisted on by the Apostles (Acts xv. 29). Who, he asks, would hesitate to eat a fowl or hare, 'Si manu a cervice percussus, nullo cruento vulnere occisus est? Et qui forte pauci adhuc tangere ista formidant, a ceteris irridentur.'—*Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, lib. xxxii. cap. xiii; *Opera*, Parisiis, 1694, tom. viii. col. 457.

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CHAPTER II.

CANONS, HOW BINDING.

THE Church, then, has power to draw up canons binding on the conscience of its members. This is true, as we have seen, as well of a bishop in his diocese as of an archbishop (or metropolitan) in his province, and of the whole Catholic Church in a general council. Of such canons so drawn up, canons of faith are at once binding upon all who owe obedience to the council, particular or general:¹ but canons of discipline are not so binding. We must now confine ourselves to the canons of discipline, and see how these bind the conscience. But first let us remark how, in Apostolic times, this distinction was observed.

The First Epistle to the Corinthians is most instructive on this head. It is in a great measure an inspired answer to certain questions of conscience, which had been submitted to the apostle by the Church at Corinth. Some of these questions were questions of faith, some were questions of discipline. It is, then, interesting and profitable to observe how the apostle deals with these.²

¹ Thus, with respect to the Council of Trent, there were ten local councils held in France to receive and promulge its decrees. The canons of faith were at once received everywhere, but not one of the councils received all the canons of discipline. 'Sed quantum concilia hæc unius labii sunt in receptione decretorum circa Fidem, tantumdem circa acceptationem, modumque acceptandi decreta disciplinæ, discrepant: nullum est enim, quod hæc universa receperit, eorumque executionem jusserit.'—Gibert, *Corpus Juris Canonici*, 1735, tom. i. p. 146.

² We may find a like difference between canons of faith and discipline as there is between Inspiration and Revelation. We believe that councils are under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, if they be properly constituted; we may,

First, then, with questions of faith. Some had been denying the resurrection of the dead ; and the apostle has to meet this denial. On this point he clearly and unequivocally lays down the faith as once for all delivered to the saints ; he shows that this had been sufficiently declared to them, that they had received it, and that it was necessary to their salvation : ' Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand : by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.' He then goes on to quote the canon of faith, which seemingly formed part of the Apostolic Creed as framed and delivered by the Apostles : ' For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.' Then, and not till then, the apostle proceeds to argument, not as if there were two possible views, either of which might be accepted without sin, but insisting on the fact that there is but one way—the acceptance of the faith ; though, out of condescension to their weakness, he argues for the doctrine, putting aside the objections of opponents. Then he ends with a glorious statement of the faith, crowning all with a stirring peroration.¹

How different is his manner with a question of discipline, therefore, expect to observe the same difference where He is the Guide. A revelation, then, may be for some local or temporal object, like the revelations made to David² about his own personal matters, or the constant flow of revelations in the early Church ; or the revelations made to St. Cyprian about the duration of persecution, &c. But Inspiration guided its subject to choose out that which was of importance for all time. Similarly, canons of discipline, though prompted and passed by the Holy Spirit's guidance, yet are not binding at all times. The Apostolic Council passed the canon against eating things strangled with a 'placuit Spiritui Sancto' ; but St. Augustine says that, if anyone felt compunction in his day on the subject, he was laughed at by his neighbours. But canons of faith properly passed are binding from the time of their acceptance.

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cipline! Let us choose out one which presents the most striking features. The Corinthians had asked about the lawfulness of eating meats which had been offered in sacrifice unto idols. Now this was one of the matters which had occupied the attention of the Apostles, who had been gathered at Jerusalem to decide on the whole question of the admission of the Gentiles to the Church of Christ. St. Paul himself had been present at this council; he had been himself sent back to Antioch with the authentic and autograph letter of the council; he, therefore, knew its canons and decrees perfectly well; indeed, in his progress 'throughout Syria and Cilicia,' 'as they went through the cities they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the Apostles and Elders which were at Jerusalem.' We should therefore expect that the apostle's answer would be short and decisive, and somewhat of this kind:—'This is a question which has been decided in a general council of the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem, and you must therefore abstain from eating such meats under pain of mortal sin.' At all events, this would be the decision of some amongst us now. But what is his real reply? He deals with the question as perfectly open, and to be decided chiefly, if not entirely, by the law of charity, which avoids giving offence to the weaker brethren. There is no allusion whatever, however distant, to the canons of discipline issued by his own means from Jerusalem. At the outset, he lays down the duty of humility and charity: 'We know that we all have knowledge: knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.' The apostle then goes on to argue that an idol is a nonentity, and therefore there cannot be any inherent evil in eating that which has been offered to an idol; and in conclusion he gives his decision in three rules, which embody the laws of charity and common sense. His three rules are these:—
1. Buy what is sold publicly in market, and don't ask any questions as to where it came from; for it is sufficiently

consecrated to your own use by being part of the fulness of the earth, which is the creation and property of your Lord. 2. If you are invited to dine with a heathen, go if you like; and when there, eat all that is set before you without hesitation, asking no questions. 3. If, however, some one says that you are eating an idol-sacrifice, you had better refrain for his sake, not for your own conscience' sake, which would not be touched.

Here, then, is a private matter which affected only the individual conscience; the apostle lays down that it is indifferent whether or no a Christian man eats of meat consecrated to an idol, though this practice had been condemned in a council of Apostles. When, however, the act became a scandal to others, the apostle earnestly deprecated it. Just as, in another matter of discipline affecting public scandal, he speaks with peremptory utterance:—'If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God.'

Having thus seen how St. Paul deals with canons of discipline, let us go on to consider what vigour they have since been held to obtain, and how they bind the conscience.

Here, again, we must first remember that canons of discipline have been distinguished into those that enforce divine law, and those which only declare human law.

Each of these classes has been again subdivided, and we have, 1. divine law natural, and 2. divine law positive.

1. Divine law natural is invariable and immutable. It is the light of reason (properly illuminated) about those things which we owe to God and man. The Ten Commandments are an abridgment of this divine law, and all the moral precepts of the Old Testament are only explanations of the same. The summary of natural law is declared by our Lord to be the essence of the precepts of the Old Testament: 'Whatsoever ye would that men

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Canons, How Binding.

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should do unto you, even so do unto them : for this is the law and the prophets.'

2. Divine law positive can change and has changed. We find it in the Old and New Testament, and in the traditions of the Church from Apostolic times which explain the New Testament.

Human law is subdivided into, 1. written, and 2. unwritten. 1. Written human law of the Church is contained in those commonly called canons or constitutions ; and 2. unwritten human law is called custom.

Now some canons of discipline contain natural law, and these, so far as they contain this, are always binding ;¹ but where they contain positive human law, these are not binding anywhere until they have been promulged and accepted.² This is true of canons of discipline of general councils as well as of particular councils. It is but following the Apostolic rule. St. Paul had received a letter of canons from Jerusalem to the Churches of Syria and Cilicia, in answer to their appeal for a decision on a matter of deep importance ; as he went throughout these provinces he 'gave them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the Apostles and Elders which were at Jerusalem.' But these canons had not been promulged in Corinth : therefore the apostle does not seem to have regarded them as binding there, nor does he refer to them at all.

The same method has ever been observed. Thus, after the first General Council of Nicæa, letters were written to

¹ Van Espen (*De Veterum Canonum Stabilitate*, § 2, *Opera*, vol. iii. p. 2 ; Lovanii, 1753), who points out that many canons affecting the clergy are of natural law : 'Hi proinde similesque canones, si non stent jure positivo, semper tamen stabunt jure naturali : saltem quoad ea quæ juris naturalis in illis continentur.'

² Van Espen, *De Promulgatione Legum Ecclesiasticarum*, pars i. cap. i. : 'Nulla lex vim obligandi habet ante factam illius promulgationem.' Gratian before had the well-known apophthegm, 'Leges instituuntur cum promulgantur, firmanur cum moribus utentium approbantur.'—*Decretum*, pars i. dist. iv. cap. iii. § Leges. Compare De Marca, *De Concordantia Sac. et Imp.* II. xvi. §§ 5, 6 ; Bambergæ, 1788, tom. i. p. 310.

the bishops who were not at the council, with a copy of the canons. Similarly, also, after the Council of Ephesus a circular letter was written to all the bishops who were not present, that they might make the canons known.¹

The minister of publication, then, is the bishop, the successor of the Apostles, in his diocese. As Pope Leo IV. wrote to the bishops of Britain: 'Since in the holy councils rules have been promulged and received by bishops, who besides bishops have power to be publishers of the decrees of the canons?'

Some persons have thought that a Church is bound by the decrees of a council, if representatives of the Church were there. But this has never been allowed by good canonists, and, indeed, it has never obtained. The British Church was represented by three bishops at the Council of Arles, in 314 A.D.; yet the canons of that council about Easter never seem to have obtained in Britain, in consequence of such representation; nor did the Church in our land keep Easter as the rest of the Western Church did, until St. Augustine of Canterbury promulgated this canon of discipline for the Christians of his obedience in the seventh century. It is, therefore, of no more than historical interest to us to learn that representatives of the English Church were present at the Synod of Dort, and that one of our bishops preached the opening sermon.

First, then, for the binding of canons of discipline on the conscience, they must be promulged and accepted in the various provinces and dioceses.

It is, then, clearly open to particular Churches to refuse to accept certain canons of discipline² even though

¹ 'Ut Prælati, quibus publicandi onus incumbit, huic muneri non defuturi essent.'—Gibert, i. 24. 'Cum in sacris conciliis ab episcopis promulgatæ sunt regulæ et receptæ, quis extra episcopos promulgator canonicarum quiverit esse sententiarum?'—Pope Leo IV. *Ad Episcopos Britannia*, cit. Gibert. i. 25.

² There are many canons of the fourth Council of Constantinople which were never received in France (Gibert, i. 104). The canons of discipline of Trent were not received in their entirety in France, nor in Belgium, nor in Spain.

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passed by a general council. Thus the Church of England refused to accept the foreign canons about marriage. When the papal legate endeavoured to impose them, there was the now proverbial cry, 'Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari;' so it has been doubted whether certain canons were ever received in England. To give an example:—

The disciplinary canons of Trent were not considered as binding in England by the Roman Catholics resident in our midst. And why? Because they were never promulged and accepted, therefore they had no binding force.¹ Hence follows one of the most striking proofs that the Roman Catholics do not represent the old Church of England—for they distinctly lack identity of law. When the missionaries trained in foreign seminaries came over to England, at the end of Elizabeth's reign and the beginning of the reign of James I., they probably knew nothing of, and cared less for, the law of the Church of England. So, in one noteworthy particular at least, they introduced the law they knew best. The canons of Trent had never been imposed in England, so these they brought not (except where they suited their convenience seemingly), but they introduced the old foreign canon law existing on the continent before the Council of Trent. No doubt they thought this was the old English law, or ought to have been, if it was not. To take this noteworthy particular.

The law of the Church of England as to a valid marriage has never been altered. This was declared plainly and distinctly in the judgment of the highest Court of Appeal in 1843.² The Church of England has always required

¹ Cf. *Memoirs of Panzani*, pp. 123 and 272. Ultramontanes will of course say that the binding force depends upon the *imposition* of the Pope. This was not the ancient opinion.

² Chief Justice Tindal, in giving the opinion of the Judges (before the House of Lords, July 7, 1843), said: 'There never existed a rule that a contract *per verba de presenti* constituted a marriage in fact. . . . One of the earliest

it to be necessary to a valid marriage that it should be, (1) *per verba de præsenti*, 'by mutual contract;' (2) *in facie ecclesiæ*, 'in the face of this congregation;' (3) *per presbyterum sacris ordinibus constitutum*, 'in the presence of a priest in holy orders.' This old law of the Church of England is still asserted in the rubrics of our marriage service. But this is not the law of the 'Roman obedience' in England; they hold pretty much the same law as that of Scotland, which does not require the presence of a priest. Hence the great efforts made in mixed marriages to prevent the marriage ceremony from being performed first in an English Church.¹ This would be a valid Sacrament in their eyes, that it should be *per verba de præsenti* being all that is required; another service would be a sacrilegious iteration of the Sacrament. This law, that consent made Holy Matrimony, was never accepted in the English Church; hence the Roman Catholics in England have no legal identity with the ancient *Ecclesia Anglicana*.

Canon law, then, to be binding on the conscience, must have been promulged and accepted. The imposition depends upon the local council even in canons of discipline passed at a general council, because its real vigour depends upon its having been accepted. What, then, are the disciplinary canons of Carthage or of Constance to us? Absolutely nothing more than historical

constitutions in English ecclesiastical law expressly and pointedly required the presence of a priest in orders to complete the contract of marriage. In subsequent constitutions there was nothing to reverse or shake off the effect of this.—*Jurist*, vol. vii. part i. Compare this with the definition of the Council of Florence: '*Causa efficiens matrimonii regulariter est mutuus consensus per verba de præsenti expressus.*'—Carranza, *Summa Conciliorum*, Parisiis, 1668, p. 657.

¹ '*Factum valet, fieri non debuit,*' would be said by them; but another marriage of the same parties would be an iteration of the Sacrament, and therefore sacrilege. This statement is made on the authority, oral and written, of a priest of the Roman obedience in England. There seems to be no manual of canon law as it is regarded to bind the Roman Catholics in England.

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CHAPTER III.

DISUSER ABROGATES CANON LAW.

CANONS of discipline then must be published, that they may have binding force; but still more, for this binding force to continue, they must be continually enforced, or 'put in ure'; they must be enjoined constantly, so that it may be known that they are binding.

This is the reason why councils so constantly repeat the same canons over and over again. It must astonish those who are commencing to read the canons, to find how constantly councils seem to repeat what has been said before, to the same effect, if not in the same words. The canon had been either badly kept, 'male observatus,' or abrogated by disuser, 'abrogatus per non usum;' therefore it required to be re-enacted.

If, therefore, we want to know what is binding, we must find out what is being enforced. 'Pour connoltre les Lois et les coutumes qui sont en vigueur, il faut voir celles qui sont le plus constamment suivies dans les jugements,' is the rule given by Fleury, the great ecclesiastical historian: and again, 'Et généralement, on n'est point obligé d'observer les Lois écrites, qui demeurent notoirement sans exécution.'¹

This, no doubt, is the reason of the answer given by Archbishop Sumner to a priest who was in doubt about the

¹ *Institution au Droit Ecclésiastique*, partie i. chap. ii. Opuscles, Nîmes, 1780, vol. ii. p. 162. Compare Gibert, i. 65: 'Præterea oportet ut usu recipiantur, et retineantur, i.e. acceptentur et non abrogentur contrariâ consuetudine.'

force of canons, an answer said to have been acquiesced in by the late Bishop Phillpotts of Exeter. The decision was that the rubrics were binding on the conscience, but that canons were only binding when enforced by the bishop. Whether this had respect to the fact that the rubrics had become statute law or not, does not matter; the same distinction will apply in either case. For when canon law becomes incorporated in rubrics, it becomes continually binding, as being constantly enforced in the book which priests are bound to use continually. Hence the 'rubricæ generales' of the missals, and the 'cautelæ,' which incorporate the general canons and rules affecting the celebration and reception of the Sacrament of the Altar, bind those who belong to Churches which use the unreformed office books. These canons, by being thus continually enforced, are binding on the users of the book; so that that which is therein contained becomes really binding more by being in the rubrics than by being in the canons.

In a similar manner, other canons are continually enforced by the proper officer, the bishop, at his visitation. This is the very end and object of the visitation, that the bishop may see that such canons as are in force are observed, and that he may punish the offender against them. Hence articles of visitation, and enquiries to which the clergy and churchwardens have to make answer. If these things fall into desuetude, on the conscience of the bishops be it: they are directly responsible to the Great Head of the Church for their conduct.

It was for this that the earlier councils used to number on their canons from the canons passed at preceding councils. Thus, the first canon of the Council of Ancyra would be numbered 'twenty-one' in the code of canons received and enforced, since there were twenty canons passed at the Council of Nicæa; and by this numbering the council recognised and re-enforced all the twenty canons. Thus the Council of Chalcedon quoted the ninety-fifth canon of

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Antioch, which council only issued sixteen new canons; but when the twenty canons of Nicæa, the twenty-five of Ancyra, the fourteen of Neocæsarea, the twenty of Gangra, and the sixteen of Antioch are all added together, the number of ninety-five canons is arrived at; and we find the canon quoted at Chalcedon.¹ Thus the canons of preceding councils were at each council again accepted, if they were still regarded as binding.

But as time went on, and canons were multiplied, there was a kind of digest of canons made to be read at the opening of a council, that the council might see what had been already ordained, and either accept all that had been so published, or such parts of them as seemed good. The digest written by the great Durandus,² and read at the Council of Vienne, was printed in 1545, in case the Council of Trent might find it useful. In this the renowned *Juris Speculator* points out the advisability or propriety of re-enacting certain ancient canons as if they had lost force, though they were in Gratian's *Decretum*: in other cases he suggests some for discussion; e.g. 'Hoc in plerisque mundi partibus non servatur, pensandum est an expediret servari.'

From a similar cause, too, canons have been constantly codified and reduced to order, that they might the more easily be known and enforced. Thus, in the African code we find the canons of various councils reduced to method, and re-enacted. Nor can there be much doubt that when the book of canons was drawn at London, 1603-4, that book was intended to be for the Church of England what the 'Codex Ecclesiæ Africanæ' was for the Church of North Africa—viz. the book containing all the canons then binding on the English Church; for there is very little new

¹ See Johnson's *Vade-Mecum*, vol. ii. p. 41.

² 'Tractatus de modo generalis concilii celebrandi, per R. P. D. Quillem Durandum Juris Speculatorem nuncupatum,' &c. Parisiis apud Poncetum le Preux, 1545.

in them, they merely incorporate and re-enact old canons. That this was intended seems probable, to say the least, from the fact that the visitation articles of the bishops,¹ directly after the passing of the code, do not travel much beyond the lines laid down in the canons or rubrics.

The following passage from a good English canonist, Bishop Stillingfleet, is so much to the purpose that it is cited at length.²

There are some canons, where the general disuse in matters of no great consequence to the good of the Church or the rights of other persons may abate the force of the obligation; especially when the disuse hath been connived at, and not brought into articles of visitation, as Can. 74, about *gowns with standing collars, and cloaks with sleeves*. But the general reason continues in force—viz. that there should be a decent and comely habit for the clergy, whereby *these should be known and distinguished by the people*; and for this the ancient custom of the Church is alleged. . . . If we do strictly oblige persons to observe all ecclesiastical canons made by lawful authority, we run men into endless scruples and perplexities; and Gerson himself grants *that many canons of general councils have lost their force by disuse*, and that the observation of them now would be useless and impossible.

But it will naturally be asked how long must disuse prevail, and how widely, to remove binding force from a canon? Here Gibert, the French canonist, shall give us answer.³ He says:—

¹ See a very interesting collection of these at the end of the second report of the Ritual Commission in 1868.

² *Ecclesiastical Cases*, part i. 1698, p. 374. Bishop Sanderson also says, 'It is certain that laws rightly constituted may be abrogated by a contrary custom, so that they cease any longer to oblige.' Quoted by Bishop Wordsworth in *The Law of the Church on Ritual* (Rivingtons, 1868, p. 16); who also quotes Ayliffe's *Parergon* and Coke to the same effect.

³ *Corpus Juris Canonici*, Proleg. pars prior, tit. xx. § 3, diff. i. vol. i. p. 164; see also p. 65. Van Espen, pleading for the restoration of discipline, says, 'Scio quidem, consuetudine, praelatorum et superiorum tacito interveniente consensu, posse interdum rigorem discipline mitigari, quin et canones ipsos aliquatenus abrogari.'—*De Vet. Canonum Stabilitate*, § 4, Lovanii, 1753, tom. iii. p. 4; see also p. 7. He shows how the penitential canons were abrogated by disuse. It used to be unlawful for a priest to enjoin any penance not laid

Abrogated canons have lost the force of law, because the superior consented to their disuse, which has prevailed for more than forty years without disturbance or interruption.

Here, however, must arise the question as to who is the superior whose consent is required for abrogation. It is the bishop in his diocese or the metropolitan in council in his province. Just as the bishop is the diocesan officer for the promulgating a law and seeing that it is kept, so he is the superior whose consent or whose silence allows contrary use to abrogate a positive canon. Similarly the metropolitan in council passes canons for the province and accepts or rejects canons from without, and his silence confirms the abrogation by disuser of a law within his province.

Of course, Ultramontanes assert that the Pope is the superior whose consent is required; but Ultramontanes do not allow the independence of national Churches, and take their stand on the false decretals. To these I do not refer; all the authorities here relied on are Gallican or Anglican, who acknowledge the independence of particular Churches.

Nor can it be said that a general council is the superior whose consent is required; for it has been seen that, in a matter of discipline and not of faith, the canons even of a general council are accepted or not by the local and particular councils; that is, by the metropolitan and his suffragans. The imposer of a canon, therefore, is the metropolitan in his province, and the bishop in his diocese.

Gibert, therefore, goes on to show what is required for contrary custom to abrogate canon law.¹

down in the Penitential. He also points out how some canons of the early Church, affecting the character of candidates for orders, are nowhere observed in the West. 'Sunt innumeri canones abrogati aut per non usum aut per usum contrarium, probatum silentio superioris.'—Gibert, i. 109.

¹ *Corpus Juris Canonici*, tom. i. pars posterior, p. 92. The opinion of Gratian on abrogation is worth quoting:—'Just as by the contrary customs of the users some laws have been now abrogated [to abrogate is wholly to remove the law], so by the customs of the users the laws themselves are confirmed. Wherefore the law of Pope Telesphorus (who decreed that generally the clergy

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That a canon should be abrogated by contrary usage there are required but three points :—1. That the usage should be reasonable ; that is, not adverse to good morals. 2. That it should be lawfully pleaded ; that is, that it should obtain for forty years without the protest of the Church. 3. That it should be general ; that is, in the Universal Church if the question is of universal abrogation, or in the nation if of national disuser, or in the whole province or diocese if the matter be of provincial or diocesan abrogation.

When a canon has thus been abrogated either by disuser or by contrary usage it becomes practically dead ; it cannot be revived as binding on the conscience except by the same authority which first enacted it ; therefore, as the bishop has ever been regarded as the diocesan officer for the publication of ecclesiastical law, it is evident that no canon which has become dead by disuser can be revived by a mere priest to make it binding on the conscience. It may be adopted by an individual as a useful rule for himself, so long as it does not affect others ; or it may be recommended to others, but it clearly may not be laid down as a general rule, binding the consciences of the laity or clergy in general.

should fast from flesh and delicacies from Quinquagesima), since it has not been approved by the customs of the users, does not convict, as guilty of a fault, those who act otherwise.'—*Decretum*, pars i. dist. iv. cap. iii. § *Leges*, and cap. vi. § *Hæc etai*. Similarly the great summist St. Thomas: 'Custom both has the force of law, and abolishes law, and is the interpreter of laws.'—*Prima Secunda*, quest. xcvi. art. 3. In the *Summa Summarum* of Sylvestro Mazzolini (s. v. *Lex*, Lugduni 1551, pars ii. p. 139) there are many canons alleged as being abrogated by disuser or the contrary custom. Two are connected with the subject of this Essay—viz. the communicating after food on Maundy Thursday, and the fasting *after* the act of Communion. These, as the gloss on Gratian and St. Thomas point out, are abrogated by the contrary custom, and not by any positive enactment.



PART II.

THE CANONS ALLEGED FOR FASTING COMMUNION

CHAPTER I.

HISTORY OF THE CANONS.

SECTION I. *Origin of the Canons.*

THE first thing that strikes a man who begins to investigate the subject, is that it is difficult to find canons which enforce Fasting Communion. He would probably turn to the three massy folios which contain the Decretum, the Decretals, and the Extravagants, and he would only find one short paragraph about the Fasting Communion of the laity. This paragraph is no ancient canon, whether of a general or local council, but an extract, and it may be said an unfair extract, from St. Augustine's letter to Januarius. It would seem to imply that in St. Augustine's day there was no exception to a stringent rule of Fasting Communion, whereas indeed there is no question about the commemorative feast before Communion on Maundy Thursday at least. It would seem as if the letter were written in answer to questions how to keep the African canon lately introduced for Fasting Communion.

This extract seems to have misled, if such a supposition may be ventured on, even St. Thomas himself: ¹ for he

¹ *Summa*, pars iii. questio lxxx. art. 8, § 3; Venetiis, 1757, tom. v. p. 546, col. 1. That St. Thomas was thus misled is rendered likely by the fact that the argument he advances is first seen in a gloss upon Gratian III. *De Consec.* Dist. i. cap. xlix. § Exceptio.

quotes two portions of the letter, both of which are in the extract, and he falls into a strange error, which he could not have made if he had been conversant with the letter itself. He recites the objection that 'on Maundy Thursday at least a man may take the Body of Christ after other food.' To this he thinks it sufficient answer to quote a passage from this extract of St. Augustine as it is found in Gratian. 'But now this has been abrogated, for, as Augustine says, this custom is held throughout the whole world—viz. that the Body of Christ should be received by the fasting.' Yet St. Augustine not only does *not* say that it is abrogated, but he takes the Maundy for granted. It is quite clear that St. Thomas could not have read through this letter, when he quoted St. Augustine to prove the disuse of the Maundy which was insisted on, or at least sanctioned, by several African councils at which St. Augustine himself was present.

Then, if the enquirer turns to our own English canonist Lyndwode, he cannot find there any prohibition of lay Communion after meat, though he will find the prohibition of those who have not received particular absolution after confession.

If he takes up a summary of the canons, such as that of Carranza, and looks in the index, the only reference given is to a canon falsely attributed to Pope Soter.

But there are certainly some canons which are commonly adduced, and to the consideration of them we must now turn.

The first point to be considered about them is the history of their origin, as this must be the starting point of all historical investigation of their meaning and value. In order to this, it will be well to quote at length the opinion of a learned Greek monk at the very commencement of the twelfth century. This is important and valuable for several reasons. It is one of the earliest existing attempts to investigate the bearing of these canons; and, as the

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writer says, he seeks to deal with them historically, not introducing his own opinions, but drawing out his teaching from the canons themselves. The testimony comes from Constantinople, nearly two hundred years before St. Thomas Aquinas, from the pen of a man who took a foremost place at the time in matters of learning. The passage is quoted at length by Leo Allatius in his work '*De Ecclesiæ perpetuâ consensione*,'¹ from a manuscript in his possession, and a portion is quoted with full approbation by Martene, in his work '*De Ritibus Ecclesiæ*.'² It has therefore the advantage of acceptance in East and West. The author is Joannes Phurnes, a monk in the monastery of Mount Gaius in the Propontis, in the reign of the Emperor Alexius Comnenus, that is, somewhere about A.D. 1100. He seems to have taken a considerable part in the controversies of the day between the Latin and Greek Churches, and to have been acknowledged by his contemporaries as a man of great learning.

He is giving the substance of a discourse which he represents himself as having delivered before the Empress on the subject of the change of customs in the Church. The letter or essay begins thus :—

Since your Holiness, most sacred Father, desired my vileness to write to you (who were present at the time and were listening) the discourse I delivered before the Empress—I mean the one about the change in the reception of the Communion and its gradual alteration and advance—see, taking courage from your request, I do this briefly, saying and adding nothing of my own, but only comparing the words of the sacred canons with each other, and explaining them from themselves. And I say that the first Christians were indifferent and not exact about many matters, holding firmly and safely to one thing only—viz. belief in the one Holy Trinity, Giver of Life, of one substance, Eternal; and in one Person of the Trinity, our Lord Jesus Christ, who for us men and for our salvation devised the dispensation which is ineffable, and

¹ Lib. iii. cap. xiii. § 15; Colonæ Agrippinæ, 1648, col. 1153.

² Lib. i. cap. iii. art. 4, § 2; Antuerpiæ, 1763, p. 107.

far exceeds everything that is now. Though even then there were some heretics who differed about this, and withdrew to different opinions. But about the other things that were done in the Church they paid attention just so far as was sufficient for the faith and was accurate, being zealous for one thing only that was urgent.

Wherefore, since the Church of God ever advances towards that which is better, we find that the work of a priest and the Communion of the Holy Bread has been advanced towards improvement even till the present time. For those that were before us did not celebrate this at set times, nor did they partake of it fasting as it seems, but rather after they had taken the ariston. On account of this custom the Synod which was summoned at Laodicea [cir. A.D. 367] in Phrygia, anxious lest, under pretence of this custom, the Thursday on which the Lord's Supper¹ took place should be relaxed from fasting (since men would be first eating and satiating themselves, and after this celebrating the awful sacrifice and receiving), the Synod, I say, wrote in the fiftieth chapter in the following words:—'That it is not lawful in Lent on Thursday in the last week to relax the fast and dishonour the whole Lent, but the whole of Lent must be fasted, and dry food taken.'

For since Christ at evening gave the Divine mystery to His disciples, and made them partakers of His own holy Flesh and Blood, though He had manifestly taken the ariston previously, they too used to do the same every day² when Christ was offered, and having first taken the ariston [that is, the heavy meal in the forenoon], used to partake of the Eucharist thus celebrated.

This custom they continually observed, not only on other days, but on that great Thursday, and never thought they were doing wrong in observing the ancient tradition.

Which tradition this holy Synod is manifestly abrogating, and says,³ 'Be it so: Let it be conceded that the custom exist always,

¹ That is, the Thursday before Good Friday, when the commemorative 'Supper of the Lord' was celebrated, in remembrance of the Last Supper when the institution of the Blessed Sacrament took place.

² Joannes seems to imply that a similar reason led to the enactment of the preceding canon. This, he would argue, confines celebrations during Lent to Saturday and Sunday, not because the Communion broke the fast, but because the preceding ariston broke the fast; and Saturday and Sunday were throughout the Eastern Church feasts of obligation even during Lent.

³ Joannes seems here to be citing the words of the synod. The passage is difficult, and the Latin translation of Allacci has been taken as a guide to

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and let bodily food precede the Communion of the Spotless Body. Yet this must not be also on the Great Thursday, since it is Lent, and the fast has been proclaimed; for the whole temperance of Lent is dishonoured by this transgression.' Since then the canon evidently forbids men to do this on that day, it is manifest that with the men of that age the day used to be relaxed from the fast, because men took the ariston before the Communion of Grace. And this Synod made this distinction in its decrees which it put forth for the well ordering of the Church.

But the holy local Synod at Carthage [A.D. 419], in some other determinations useful for ecclesiastical affairs in those parts, or on account of the distance between Phrygia and Carthage being ignorant of what had been ruled there (since, indeed, it seems it had not then received, though so long a time had intervened, the things decreed at Nicæa at the first Synod, as it was making enquiries¹ from Constantinople, and Antioch, and the Alexandrian Church), is seen to pass a different canon in respect of the afore-said day. For it says thus in the forty-first chapter—'That the holy things of the altar are not to be celebrated except by fasting men, the one anniversary being excepted in which the Lord's Supper is celebrated.' In these words it forbids the taking of food at other times before the Communion, but because of the custom that this was done on the one day it concedes the previous eating at the holy office manifestly because the Lord did so with His disciples. For if men used not to partake after the ariston, why should it be said that the holy things of the altar are not to be celebrated except by fasting men, the exception confessedly suggesting the idea? Then the Council goes on to speak of something else that was wont to be done at that time—'But if the commendatory of any who died in the afternoon, whether bishop or others, has occurred, they say that only the prayers were to be celebrated, if those who offered them had taken the ariston.' For it seemed that if anyone died in the afternoon the

the meaning. As Allacci was a Greek he may be supposed to know what was meant.

¹ They only made enquiries because the legate of the Bishop of Rome had quoted as a veritable canon of Nicæa some rule which did not exist in the authentic copy brought to Carthage by Cæcilianus, the metropolitan of Africa. They did not like to accuse the Patriarch of Rome of falsity or forgery without reference to the other patriarchal sees. Joannes is quoting the canon as it appears in the Code of the African Church drawn up in A.D. 419, and not as the Canon of Hippo, where it was first passed, A.D. 393.

ceremonies of the holy office were celebrated, and this though all had taken the ariston. But the Synod forbade that custom, and says that the oblation indeed may be made for the dead in the afternoon, but this must only be if those who do so are fasting. But if they chance to have taken the ariston, the commendatory is to be only with the prayers, excluding altogether the taking the ariston in the whole of the year, as has been said, and allowing them only to use this custom on one day, because also it had its beginning at the Mystical Supper.

But after an interval the fathers of the seventh Œcumenical Synod [A.D. 692] with all discretion put an end also to this policy,¹ in their twenty-ninth chapter thus proclaiming:—'The canon of those at Carthage declares that the holy things of the altar are not to be celebrated except by fasting men, with the exception of one day, whereon the Lord's Supper is celebrated, when, perhaps, the fathers used this policy for certain local reasons profitable to the Church. Since, however, there is nothing urging us to forsake our stringency, we, following the traditions of the Apostles and Fathers, determine that men ought not to relax the Thursday in the last week of Lent, and dishonour the whole Lent,² but men must fast and eat dry food the whole of Lent.' The Synod determined to agree with the utterances of Laodicea in Phrygia; yet it did not despise the Synod at Carthage which thus determined, but even praised it for its policy.

This is a very remarkable passage, showing that, in the opinion of the writer, the restriction of celebration and reception to fasting men began in the middle of the fourth century, and was then gradually introduced. He points out that the first restriction was at the Council of Laodicea, and originated not because of the necessity of Fasting Communion, but because of the respect due to the Lenten fast. The second restriction he shows was in the African canon,

¹ They only discontinued the Maundy so far as it interfered with the strictness of the Lenten fast. This was the only reason given for their refusal to re-enact the African canon. The Trullan fathers, therefore, knew of no other fast than the ecclesiastical fast; the technical 'jejunium naturæ' was unknown to them.

² The latter words, 'but men must fast and eat dry food the whole of Lent,' are found in the Canon of Laodicea but not in the Canon of the Council in Trullo. Cf. Bruns, i. p. 46.

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venth Ecumenical also to this policy,¹ 'The canon of the altar are with the exception of ed, when, perhaps, reasons profitable to urging us to forsake of the Apostles and ax the Thursday in le Lent,² but men The Synod deter- ea in Phrygia; yet a thus determined,

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which he knew as it appears in the African Codex drawn up at or after the Council of Carthage held in A.D. 417. Whether he is perfectly right or not about the custom of receiving after the ariston being usual,¹ there can be little doubt that the general statement is true, that there was no such rule as a compulsory abstinence from food from midnight till the act of Communion at least for the first four centuries. The African canon is the first rule known. Indeed there may be seen indications of the near connection of the Blessed Sacrament with a meal in the traditional feeling in some parts that Communion was a breach of the fast, and in the postponing the hour of celebration on fast days until such time as the fast was over. Thus, in discussing the question of the commemorative *Cena Domini*, St. Augustine recommends that the Lenten fast be still observed, and that the celebration be held in the evening after the refectio which was usual at three o'clock. But be this as it may, it is most significant and noteworthy, that the first rule of any Church to be found in favour of Fasting Communion is at the end of the fourth century.

Now the conversion of Constantine made a marvellous change in the Church. It was affected within and without, in external worship and in the inner life of its members. The scourge of persecution was removed, beautiful and costly edifices arose to the glory of God in Christ, and the Church was no longer compelled to worship in mean buildings hidden from view. But at the same time this tended to the decadence of the holy piety which had hitherto been in the ascendant.² So long as it was dangerous to life or limb to be a Christian, then indeed men only

¹ The Aquarii in St. Cyprian's time used to offer water only in the morning, and wine with some water in the evening, at or after the *Cena*. St. Cyprian has no blame for the celebration being at or after Supper; it could, therefore, have been no strict rule in his day that no food was to intervene between celebration or communion and the previous midnight.

² See Fleury's *Mœurs des Chrétiens*, cap. lv. *Opusculs*, Nîmes, 1780, tom. i. p. 252 *Relâchement des Chrétiens*.

professed Christianity because of their intense belief. This belief taught them that their Lord was the judge of the world, to reward the righteous and to punish the wicked ; and as day by day they lived in fear of death, so day by day they lived pure and holy lives for the most part. Therefore, as Joannes Phurnes implies, they had no need to pass canons of discipline, but they had to be strict about the one only faith. But when the Court became Christian, Christianity became as it were the fashion. The old idolatry had been so long undermined that few believed it, but many professed adherence to it as the State religion, and readily left it when the State did. Amidst the great influx of members into the Church many now entered from temporal and low motives ; some from curiosity, some to please their relations or friends : and so it came to pass that among the corn there were seen symptoms of the tares. We find St. Augustine warning the Catechumens¹ who were preparing for Baptism that they must not be scandalized on finding that many of those professing Christianity were persons of evil lives. He gives a long and sad list of evil livers within the pale of the Church, which shows that, when the world became Christian in name, there was but little real change, but it remained the world still. This was seen especially in the matter of excess in food ; and St. Augustine has to acknowledge that there was much truth in the accusations of the Manichees in this respect. Indeed, St. Augustine took this so much to heart that as soon as he was ordained priest he began to take this most earnestly in hand, and he soon found the opportunity for which he had been waiting.

Aurelius, the friend of St. Augustine, who had been deacon of Carthage, was raised to the Episcopal dignity, and by being Bishop of Carthage became chief Bishop of the African Church. Soon after his consecration St.

¹ *De Catechizandis Rudibus*, cap. vii. § 11, *Opera*, Parisiis, 1685, tom. vi. col. 270.

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Augustine addressed to him a letter¹ on the terrible abuses and disorders which were disfiguring the African Church, and implored him to do something towards checking them. He particularly inveighs against the feasting and drunkenness which prevail in the churches, and over the tombs of the martyrs. He says that the common people, uninstructed and ignorant, thought that this feasting was not only in honour² of the Saints departed, but actually conduced to their greater satisfaction³ in Paradise. The evil is so deeply seated that he thinks nothing short of a council will have any influence in checking it. He suggests that the drunkenness and excess be at least kept from the places of the Sacraments and confined to private houses, and so by degrees it might be abated and cured.⁴ He says also that drunkenness and luxurious feastings in the cemeteries may be perhaps abated, if the oblations for the dead were not costly and were granted to all who asked for them. The Benedictine editors ascribe this letter to the year A.D. 392.

The very next year the council asked for by St. Augus-

¹ Ep. xxii. ; Parisii, tom. ii. col. 27.

² St. Gregory of Tours tells us of instances where the Saints in whose honour the feast was being held miraculously supplied the wine which fell short.—*De Miraculis S. Juliani*, cap. xxv. *De Glorid Confessorum*, cap. v. *Opera*, Parisii, 1699, col. 876, 899.

³ St. Gregory of Tours records the history of a widow who provided a daily mass to be said for her departed husband. She gave the subdeacon money to provide the expensive Gazetan wine (so called from Gaza in Palestine); but he kept this for his own private drinking, and provided vinegar for the oblation. Hereupon the departed appeared to his wife and remonstrated, 'Alas ! alas ! my sweetest wife, what has all my labour in the world come to that I have now to drink vinegar in the oblation.' She answered, 'Not unmindful of thy love, I have always offered the strongest Gazetan for your rest.' However, the next morning she communicated, which she had not done for some little time : 'when she drank from the Chalice such sharp vinegar that she thought her teeth would fall out if she swallowed it not in a hurry.'—St. Gregory of Tours, *De Glorid Confessorum*, cap. lxxv. Parisii, 1699, col. 947.

⁴ St. Chrysostom adopted a like policy on a similar occasion. He urged his hearers to go home to feast, as, if excess was the result, the scandal would be less. 'Do you wish to enjoy luxury ? Enjoy it at home, where, if drunkenness happen, there will be many to take care of you.'—*Hom. in Martyres*, *Opera*, tom. ii. p. 669 A.

tine was held at Hippo Regius, where St. Augustine was now working as a priest. The Metropolitan of Carthage, Aurelius, came and presided over the council himself, and appointed St. Augustine to preach before the assembled bishops. In this council many canons of discipline were passed, some of which affected the very questions urged in St. Augustine's letter of the year before. There can scarcely be any question that the earnest appeal of St. Augustine to Bishop Aurelius was the proximate cause of the summoning of the council which met at the town where St. Augustine was priest: we should expect, therefore, that the bishops would take some measures to grapple with the abuses that St. Augustine had protested against. The twenty-eighth canon lays down that the Sacraments of the Altar are to be celebrated by fasting men,¹ except only on Maundy Thursday. Taking up the question of the oblation for the dead, the canon says that if the commendatory is to be offered in the afternoon, it is to be offered only with prayer, and without the oblation, whoever it be that has died. The next canon absolutely prohibits all the clergy from feasting in church, except under strong necessity, and the laity are to be dissuaded from so doing as much as possible.

These canons follow so closely upon St. Augustine's letter, and so embody the spirit of his recommendations, that it seems impossible to separate the one from the other. But in order the better to see how these canons could be

¹ This is the first canon on the subject, and it is passed at the provincial Council of Hippo, in A.D. 393. Baronius (who acknowledges the extreme value and importance of the Council of Hippo) ascribes this canon to the third Council of Carthage, in A.D. 397; but that council adopted and re-enacted the Canon of Hippo: 'Cæterum quoniam diversa erat aliquarum Ecclesiarum consuetudo, passimque post cœnam sacrificium offerebatur, eam sustulit in Africâ concilium Carthaginense Tertium, statue s ut a jejuniis semper, exceptâ die anniversariâ Cœnæ Domini, offerretur.' (*Baronii Annales* in An. 34, Lucæ, 1738, tom. i. p. 137.) The more important national council was more widely known. The canon is generally cited as Joannes Phurnes cites it from the *Codex Canonum Ecclesiæ Africane*, drawn up probably A.D. 419.

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in answer to St. Augustine's appeal to the chief Bishop of the African Church, it will be well to see what grounds there are for supposing that the disorders he reprobates were indeed at all connected with the Blessed Sacrament. Now, there are several hints in St. Augustine's letter and elsewhere which help us in this matter.

First, then, he says that in this excess they differed from other Churches throughout the greater part of Italy, and from 'the transmarine Churches.' What are these transmarine Churches? We are helped here by St. Augustine's saying that at Hippo they had a bishop from those parts. 'We have a bishop *from those parts*, for which we give great thanks to God; although his modesty and gentleness are such, yea his prudence and solicitude in the Lord is so great, that even if he were an African he would soon be persuaded from the Scriptures to cure the wound made by a licentious and badly free custom.' Now we know that Valerius the Bishop of Hippo was a Greek; St. Augustine, then, in speaking of transmarine Churches, clearly intends to refer to the Greek Churches.

From St. Chrysostom's writings and homilies we know something of the habits of the Greek Churches at the time, and we must see in what the difference consisted. It was not in the matter of excess. We learn from St. Chrysostom that his people had the evil habit of spending holy days in rioting and drunkenness. This, then, was not the point of difference. Nor did they feast at home. St. Augustine and St. Chrysostom both strive to make their people keep the feast at home; and the latter uses an argument which he thought would weigh with his people. He says that if they were at home, and excess was the result of their feast, at all events they would have friends to take care of them. One point of difference may have been that the Greeks, sometimes at least, feasted in taverns and not usually in church,¹ like the African sensualists. But may we not see

¹ Suicer, s.v. *ἀγῶνη*, says distinctly: 'Certe tempore Chrysostomi ἐκ'

another and still more striking point of difference? We know that the Greeks partook to excess *after* their communion: when was the African feast? There is reason to suppose it was at all events sometimes before Communion.

It is hard to think, with Faustus the Manichee, that these feasts sprang from the imitation of heathen observances. It is more pleasant to think, with some writers, that these were connected with the Christian *agapæ* rather than the heathen *Silicernia*. Indeed we are told that they were called *agapæ funerales*. This love-feast was for all Christians in common—rich and poor alike partook of it. It was a token and pledge of unity and love. Hence perhaps we may see how it was supposed that the dead benefited by the feast; for we find in St. Augustine and elsewhere that it was thought that the dead benefited by the feast, and not only by the offering of the Holy Eucharist at the time. As the blessed dead in Paradise were united with the Church on earth in true union of spirit, though withdrawn from sight and from the struggles of this world, so they would be regarded as benefiting by anything that would benefit the Church at large. Now the *agapè* or feast was for the sake of promoting and maintaining true unity and union; how appropriate then would be the thought that the Saints in Paradise had some interest in such a feast—nay, must they not benefit by it in some sort? Such may have

Augustini *ἀγνῶσις* adhuc in templis fiebant.' So also Justell in his note on the eleventh canon of the Council of Gangra: 'Hunc quoque in Ecclesiâ convivendi morem Chrysostomi ætate observatum fuisse planum est.' (*Bibliotheca Juris*, Lutetiae, 1661, tom. i. p. 81.) They ground their opinion upon two different passages, but it may be doubted, perhaps, whether St. Chrysostom is speaking of his own times, or the times of the Corinthians spoken of by St. Paul. He certainly admonishes his hearers against excess, *ἐν κρηναῖς*, after the vigil kept in church. The holding *ἀγνῶσις* in churches was finally condemned at the Trullan Council, in A.D. 692 (canon lxxiv.), so that the custom lasted on after St. Chrysostom's time for three centuries. The sermon in which the following passage occurs is falsely ascribed to St. Augustine, 'O quam plures sunt ex vobis qui prius tabernam visitant quam templum!'—*Ser. xlii. Ad Fratres in Eremitis*, Parisiis, tom. vi. App. 340.

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been the argument of some; but however this was, the fact remains, that in St. Augustine's day the dead were thought to be advantaged not only by the prayers of the faithful, not only by the offering of the Holy Eucharist, but by these common feasts in church. Now there is reason for supposing that the *agapæ* and these feasts for the dead were at all events before Communion.

Some in modern times have been angry with St. Augustine for supposing that the Corinthians, whom St. Paul blames, were guilty of excess before Communion. As is well known, St. Chrysostom was clearly of opinion that the evil which the Apostle was remedying was excess *after* Communion. How is it that St. Augustine thought that it was *before*? Probably it was because each interpreted the passage according to the practice known to him as existing in his own day. It would be natural that they should do so, for, as St. Jerome said, every man thought that the customs of his province were derived by tradition from the Apostles; and we find that neither St. Chrysostom nor even St. Augustine was free from this tendency. Both, for example, think that in the Apostles' times the celebration of the Eucharist was always in the morning, because in their own day it was at nine o'clock in the forenoon. St. Chrysostom, therefore, has to explain how it is the Apostle speaks of a *δείπνον*, or evening meal, when he was really talking of the *ἀριστον*, or morning meal. St. Augustine is in much the same position. For the Priscillianists, like the Manichees who fasted on Sunday, said that St. Paul and his congregation at Troas evidently fasted all day on Sunday, and that this example justified them in their practice. Now this was regarded as heretical in St. Augustine's day; he therefore had to meet their argument. This he did, not by boldly saying that there was no reason for doubting that the disciples met together to break bread in the evening succeeding the first day of the week when the necessary business of the day was over, but he has

to suggest several other ways of interpreting the passage. He says that if St. Paul did preach for eighteen or twenty hours, it was not that they fasted as a religious act, but only that it was necessary for him to finish what he had to say.

Similarly St. Chrysostom interprets passages from his own point of view. He thinks, for example, that because it was after the morning meal that Hannah was so deeply moved, Eli took for granted she had been drinking to excess. Such was the evil habit in St. Chrysostom's days: therefore he thus interpreted the passage.

Now in St. Chrysostom's neighbourhood the feasting in honour of the Saints was after Communion. Hence he naturally takes for granted that the excess of the Corinthians took place immediately after the Communion. But St. Augustine took for granted that the Corinthians exceeded before Communion. Probably, then, the excess he so strongly denounced in his letter to Aurelius was sometimes at least previous to Communion.

Again, there is another reason for thinking this, and that is the peculiar connection of the mortuary celebration with the excess condemned in St. Augustine's letter. He says that one way to prevent these luxurious feastings in church would be to regulate the commendatories. He advises that much money should not be spent upon them, and that commendatories should be granted without charge to all, and if any money were given it should be at once distributed to the poor. How is this then met? There is a canon passed to insist on Fasting Communion, from which Maundy Thursday is excepted; but the commendatory is expressly brought under the rule, which shows that it had not been hitherto unusual to celebrate after food for the commendatory of the dead.

These feasts for the dead seem to be represented in modern times by the Irish wakes. The Irish hold a feast round the corpse, eating and drinking the best they can

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afford, drinking to the health of the dead. In Africa the funeral probably took place soon after death, and there the feast and the mortuary celebration took place in church. If the anniversary feast took place in church, how much more the wake itself.

There is another point to be considered which helps to show that the mortuary celebrations were frequently if not ordinarily after food. In the Canon of Hippo there are two matters considered as bearing upon the new rule of fasting celebration-- viz. Maundy Thursday and the commendatory of the dead. These two questions must have been prominently before the council: the Maundy they recognized and continued, but the celebrating for the dead after food they prohibited. Remarkably enough, a similar connection between the Maundy and the mortuary celebration is seen in the Spanish canons against the Priscillianists. These heretics seem to have degraded the Blessed Sacrament into a mere appendix to the *agapè*. In the face of these low views about the Sacrament, the Spanish Church forbade the feast before the celebration, whether on Maundy Thursday or on the occasion of the 'Missa mortuorum,' and then passed on to say that the priest must be *jejunus*, or fasting, not having taken any food whatsoever. From this it appears that there existed in Spain in the sixth century the custom of offering the 'Missa mortuorum' after food as well as the Maundy Thursday celebration after the anniversary *Cæna Domini*. The Priscillianists claimed these in favour of their own debased views of the Blessed Sacrament, and in consequence of their terrible heresy the Spanish councils condemned the Maundy and the 'Missa mortuorum' after food.

This throws back a little light on the letter of St. Augustine and the consequent Council of Hippo, and brings additional argument to show that in St. Augustine's days the feasts for the dead celebrated in church were probably before the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

With these probabilities before us we can follow the policy of the fathers at Hippo. St. Augustine had earnestly appealed for a council to put a stop to the abuses he mentions: he says it would be impolitic to stop it all at once, but he implores the Metropolitan to ward it off from the tombs of the Martyrs, from the places of the Sacraments, and from the House of God. The bishops then determine to begin with the House of God and the Sacraments. The clergy they can bind absolutely: so they lay down that no celebration of the Blessed Sacrament is to be after food (except on Maundy Thursday), not even for the commending the soul of a bishop at his death. Next they prohibit any bishop or clerk from feasting in church (except under some peculiar necessity), and try to persuade the laity to give up their habits of so doing as much as possible.

This is the history of the first group of canons on Fasting Communion which emanated from the African Church. The Canon of Hippo was re-enacted at two at the least of the later Councils of Carthage; it therefore appears at Hippo in A.D. 393, at Carthage in A.D. 397, and again at Carthage in A.D. 419. It was the result of an earnest attempt on the motion of St. Augustine to ward off the terrible irreverence of possible excess from the Blessed Sacrament.

Then there follows a gap of nearly two hundred years, and the next canons we find on the subject are at the end of the sixth century. Here again there is a group of them. This time, however, it is not a mere re-enactment of the same canon at the same place. But we find the rule formulated at councils in France and Spain. At Mâcon, indeed, the Canon of Hippo is adopted and incorporated in the canon of the council on the subject; but the Spanish canons arose from their own domestic troubles with the Priscillianists.

The most remarkable consideration is that the Trullan Council at the end of the seventh century does not condemn

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Communion after food on Maundy Thursday, but con- demns the breach of Lent implied in the canon.

The testimony of the canons therefore is not that the rule they formulate on this question may not admit of exceptions. The Spanish canons, which condemn within their jurisdiction communicating after the 'prandium,' do so because the Priscillianists had degraded the Sacrament in their heresy; the Council of Mâcon accepts the *Cæna Dominica* on Maundy Thursday; and the Trullan Council discountenances it only so far as it would seem to militate against the strictness of Lent. The Council of Constance in more modern times takes Fasting Communion for granted, but there is no question about the custom in such late times.

But even if the canons had a very different aspect, it would have to be shown that they are now binding in England; for a local council of Africa, however interesting and valuable historically, is powerless to bind the conscience in England, and we may say, as was said at Constantinople, that no doubt there were good reasons for the canons put forth, but that we do not accept them. But if the Anglo-Saxon canons be alleged, it is evident that they have been so long unenforced as to lose their vigour; for if they were still binding, no man might taste food on Sunday until after he had heard the sermon at noon-day.¹

I affirm, therefore, on the foregoing argument that no canon alleged is binding on the conscience, so that not

¹ 'It is a very bad custom that many men practise both on Sundays and also other Mass days; that is, that straightways at early morn they desire to hear Mass, and immediately after the Mass, from early morn the whole day over, in drunkenness and feasting they minister to their belly and not to God. But we command that no man taste any meat before the service for the High Mass be completed, but that all, both females and males, assemble at the High Mass and at the holy and spiritual church, and then hear the High Mass and the preaching of God's Word.'—*Anglo-Saxon Witness*, by Rev. J. Baron, M.A. 1869, p. 30. Johnson (*Canons*, Oxford, 1850, vol. i. p. 478) ascribes this to A.D. 994.

to observe it entails sin, much less mortal sin, as some rigorist priests amongst us are not backward to assert.

But if any such canons are still binding, how is it that each canon is not binding in its entirety? The African canon allowed or required Communion after food on Maundy Thursday. Why do not the rigorists enforce this? They cannot think that it was condemned by the Council in Trullo, for this only condemned the implied breach of Lent and not Communion after food. The Canon of Mâcon accepts and re-enacts the Maundy Thursday celebration after food. Then, again, the Canon of Auxerre and the Anglo-Saxon Canon will not allow anyone who has broken his fast to be present in church while Mass is being said: the rigorists encourage men to break this part of those canons. The Anglo-Saxon Canon requires men to be fasting at High Mass, to hear the sermon whether they communicate or not. Why is not this binding? The main object of the Canon of Constance is to withhold the Cup from the laity: this certainly is not binding. The first Council of Braga anathematizes anyone who communicates before three o'clock in the afternoon on Maundy Thursday. Will the rigorists try to say that this anathema holds good?

The answer to this will be that times have changed: and this is the very answer that is maintained throughout this essay.

For it is preposterous to say that part of the canon has been abrogated by disuser and change of times and that the other part is still binding, though it has not been re-enacted or continuously enforced. It could only bind by being incorporated in our code of canons, or by being continuously enforced in a rubric in an office book, or by the bishop in his visitation.

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SECTION 2.—*The African Canon.*

COUNCIL OF HIPPO REGIUS, A.D. 393. THIRD COUNCIL OF CAR-
THAGE, A.D. 397. CODEX ECCLESIAE AFRICANÆ, A.D. 419.

The history of the Council of Hippo Regius has already
been given in the preceding section: there remains, there-
fore, only the investigation of the particular canon of the
council with which this essay has to deal.

The canon as it appears in the African Codex is as
follows:¹—

Ut Sacramenta Altaris non-
nisi a jejunis hominibus cele-
brentur, excepto uno die anni-
versario, quo *Cena Dominica*²
celebratur: nam si aliquorum
pomeridiano tempore defunc-
torum, sive Episcoporum, sive
cæterorum commendatio faci-
enda est, solis orationibus fiat:
si illi, qui faciunt, jam pransi
inveniuntur.

That the Sacraments of the
Altar be not celebrated except
by fasting men, the one yearly
day being excepted when *the*
Lord's Supper is celebrated:
for if the commendatory of any
dead, whether bishops or others,
have to be offered in the after-
noon, it must be only with
prayers, if those who offer it
have already taken the *pran-*
dium.

The first thing which calls for remark is the form in
which this canon is framed. The canon, wherever it appears
(and it appears in several councils), is in a form which St.
Athanasius affirmed was a sure sign of the introduction
of something new. The Canons of Hippo commence either
with the form 'placuit' or with the dependent conjunction
'ut,' which implies the presence of the *placuit* in some former
canon. The Canons of Hippo have come down to us only
in the form of a *Breviarium*, or concise summary drawn up

¹ *Bibliotheca Juris Canonici*, C. Justelli, Paris, 1661, tom. i. p. 349.

² That is, the Maundy, or Common Supper on Maundy Thursday before the
celebration of the Eucharist, in commemoration of the Mystical Supper at
which the institution of this Sacrament took place. See below, p. 100, on
Maundy Thursday.

by one of the bishops present, the primate of the Byzacene province, who was called Myzonius. But the form 'Ut Sacramenta' distinctly implies that the verb 'placuit' has a place or influence there.¹ This form of canon (for the 'placuit' is only the Latin representation of ἰδοξε) is said by St. Athanasius to be a sure sign of the introduction of something new, when it first appears, and not the attestation of the existence of an old tradition.

St. Athanasius² is ridiculing the folly of the Arians in dating their creed, as if the faith varied with worldly dates, and was not ever the same. Then he goes on to show how the Council of Nicæa made a great difference between canons of discipline then first introduced and canons of faith which were only attested as being true. 'Without prefixing Consulate month and day they wrote concerning Easter, *It seemed good as follows*; for it did then seem good that there should be a general compliance. But about the faith they wrote not *it seemed good*, but *thus believes the Catholic Church*; and thereupon they confessed how the faith lay in order to show that their own sentiments were not novel but Apostolical, and what they wrote down was no discovery of theirs, but is the same as was taught by the Apostles.' St. Athanasius clearly marks out first the distinction between canons of faith and canons of discipline, and, next, he distinctly asserts that the presence of an ἰδοξε, or a 'placuit,' or an 'it seems good' marks out some determination that has not the sanction of an Apostolical tradition.

The same test has been applied also to other canons on the same ground. The Council of Sardica allowed an

¹ Thus in the *Codex Ecclesie Africana* the canons of the Breviarium depend upon the *Si placet* of the speech of the metropolitan Aurelius in the *Acta* prefixed to canon xxxiv. (*Fustelli Bibliotheca*, tom. i. p. 347). In the preceding canons there appear the words 'item placuit ut' or 'et ut.' Similarly in the collection which goes under the name of the third Council of Carthage. See Bruns, *Canones*, i. p. 122 sq., where the phrase is either 'Placuit ut' or 'item (or similiter) placuit ut,' or simply 'ut.'

² *Opera*, Ed. Benedictina, Parisiis, 1698, tom. i. pars ii. p. 719 D.

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appeal to the Pope of Rome: this was a local council of no wide pretensions at the time, but the Popes of Rome were so pleased with this recognition of their importance that (let us hope through ignorance) they not unseldom cited the canon as having been passed at Nicæa. But when this claim was exploded, then came the not unfrequent argument that the canon only embodied ancient custom which amounted to a right. However, Archbishop de Marca brought the canon to the test that St. Athanasius had proposed, and he shows¹ that, since the canon depended upon a 'si placet,' it was manifestly not merely the attestation of an ancient Apostolic tradition, but it was indeed the utterance of something altogether new. Nor does our own Dr. Pusey at all think that this argument is unsound, for he quotes² it with approval.

If, therefore, this argument was sound in St. Athanasius when he struggled for the true faith against the Arians, if it is sound when Archbishop de Marca uses it to protect particular Churches against the insidious encroachments of Rome, it certainly must also be sound when it is used to show that Fasting Communion is not an Apostolic tradition, but was introduced, most advantageously and necessarily no doubt, but still introduced, as something new at the Council of Hippo.

For consider what this 'si placet' with its answer 'placet' and the documentary 'placuit ut' implies. It certainly implies that the question involved was introduced to the council as a debateable point, that then there was more or less discussion upon it, and lastly, that it was given from the president for the free votes of the assembled bishops. There can be no question that wherever the

¹ *De Concordia Sacerdotii et Imperii*, lib. vii. cap. iii. § 8; *Opera*, Bambergæ, 1788, tom. iii. p. 299.

² *The Councils of the Church*, p. 142, 1857. He also quotes Tillemont, 'This form is very strong to show that it was a right which the Pope had not had hitherto.'

form 'placuit ut' occurs, or even the dependent conjunction *ut*, which depends upon a previous 'placuit,' that it was perfectly open to the bishops to say 'non placet' instead of 'placet.' This freedom of opinion manifestly showed that the question offered was not an Apostolic tradition, such as infant baptism or the keeping Sunday, but was introduced as something advisable or necessary to the well-being of the Church. Had it been a tradition in full force, there would have been no need of a canon of this kind; it would be a gilding refined gold. About this Canon of Hippo, then, there is no mark whatever that the bishops are incorporating or continuing ancient law or custom. There is no 'let the ancient customs prevail' of the Nicene Council about this canon. It is clear that the bishops thought themselves perfectly free to say 'placet' or 'non placet' as they thought best; they say 'placet,' and the proposal becomes a Canon of Hippo with a 'placuit ut.' Can we suppose that the fathers at the 'plenary' Council of Hippo were so ignorant of the forms of canons, or so misunderstood language and precise language, as to place their own 'placet' over something which was already regarded as an ordinance of God, or as an immutable Apostolic tradition? No, there can be no question that Joannes Phurnes is right at least thus far, that the rule of Fasting Communion was first formulated in this canon. Therefore is it that the later councils of Carthage merely repeat and re-enact this canon. Therefore was it that when, some twenty-five years later, the bishops' legates of Mauritania had instructions to moot, and try to pass, a canon of fasting celebration, they were quite satisfied to find that the canon had been passed at Hippo and was confirmed at the council they were attending. Would they have had this question in their instructions if there had been an universal Apostolic custom of Fasting Communion? Similarly it was to this Canon of Hippo, as the first on the subject, that the Council of Mâcon referred in the sixth

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Next, the exception of the anniversary feast in commemoration of the Last Supper is further proof that Fasting Communion was no Apostolic rule, for then no one would have ventured to have inserted their own exception.

Similarly, as Joannes Phurnes well points out, the prohibition of the commendatory celebration after food is a token that up to that time there had been no restriction in that respect, and that, from the habits of the people, it might have been supposed that charity in this particular would supersede the new canon of Fasting Communion. Had there been an ancient rule on this matter, there would have been no celebration for the dead after food or after the *prandium* had been taken;¹ therefore there would have been no need for a special mention on this head.

From the canon itself, then, it is quite clear that it is introducing something new. This is clear from the form which the canon takes, and from the exception it is authorized to make, and also in the manifest allusion to a not uncommon practice of the celebration for the commending the soul of a departed Christian taking place after the *prandium*.

Still, though the council was 'plenary' for Africa, it was a local or provincial synod so far as we are concerned. In Africa even later councils passed resolutions about the re-enactment or otherwise of the Canons of Hippo, so that the council was not *ipso facto* regarded as binding; it therefore cannot *suo vigore* bind anyone at all in England.

There is one more point to be spoken of on this canon, and that is the meaning of the word *celebrare*. Authorities

¹ The meaning of the word 'jejunus' is not here discussed, because a section is devoted to the question (see p. 127, and following); where it is seen that 'jejunus' here cannot mean without food since the stroke of midnight, but in all probability it means simply 'before taking the *prandium*.'

seem divided as to whether it may be said to include the laity here or not. It is true that, by the sixth century at least, the word seems to have acquired a meaning which included the laity who were present at Communion, whether they themselves communicated¹ or not. In this case the canon excludes from being present all who had taken the *prandium*, whether they communicate or not, and in this respect it is like the old Anglo-Saxon canon, which prohibited all food on Sunday till after High Mass had been said. So that the reach of the canon is wider than they would wish who commonly cite it as binding now. But while from the context and the language of subsequent canons it would seem that Bartholomew of Brescia had good grounds for confining the meaning to *priests*, yet the language of St. Augustine in his letter to Januarius will probably show that it should here be extended to the laity. But this argument is unimportant. What is of real importance is, that the canon is the first introduction of fasting celebration into the law of the Church in the West, and, so far as Christians in England are concerned, it does not bind their consciences *proprio vigore*.

Historically, then, the Canon of Hippo is of enormous importance. It shows how the Church of Africa struggled with the sins of drunkenness and gluttony. It is referred back to by at least four later councils in various parts. But it does not bind the English conscience, for there is no proof that it was ever accepted here as it was at Mâcon; and though the former part was enforced in England for some time, there is no proof of its having been regarded as binding for the last three hundred years—that is, seven

¹ Thus St. Gregory of Tours has the record of a woman who was present at daily celebration for the repose of her deceased husband: 'Mulier vero per annum integrum ad hoc templum degens assidue orationi vacabat, celebrans quotidie missarum solemniam.' (*De Glorid Confessorum*, cap. lxx. : *Opera*, Parisiis, 1699, p. 947.) St Cyprian may, perhaps, be using the word in this sense when he writes, 'Sacrificia divina cum Dei Sacerdote celebramus.'—*De Oratione Dominica*; *Opera*, Parisiis, p. 205, 1/26.

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times the period assigned for the lapse of a canon by desuetude.¹

SECTION 3.—*The Spanish Canons.*

FIRST AND SECOND COUNCILS OF BRAGA, A.D. 563 AND A.D. 572.

SEVENTH COUNCIL OF TOLEDO, A.D. 646.

The Spanish Church was long troubled with the Priscillianist heresy.² The very means that were at the first taken to stop the heresy rather tended to its increase. Priscillian, after whom it was called, was quite the man to head a new sect. He was a wealthy man, of good birth, a great ascetic, learned in the wisdom of the world, ready in speech if not eloquent, and of a handsome presence to give effect to his teaching. His influence seems to have been so considerable that the bishop, to whom the Council of Saragossa committed the charge of opposing and extinguishing the heresy, applied to the secular arm to help him in the work he had undertaken. Unfortunately the bishop who was appointed to this task did not shine by comparison with Priscillian. Indeed, it is hard now to see why such a man was chosen except it were for his unscrupulous power of attack. Sulpicius Severus describes³ the man, who was a bishop of Sossaba named Ithacius, as 'of no weight or piety, but daring, loquacious, impudent, extravagant, and a great gourmand.' The historian says that this man was so unwise as to include all who led a

¹ The Church of England notoriously breaks one of the canons of the third Council of Carthage by addressing three of the collects said at the altar to God the Son—viz. the Collects for the Third Sunday in Advent, for St. Stephen's Day, and for the First Sunday in Lent. See Co. Carthag. III. can. xxiii. : 'Cum altari adssistitur semper ad Patrem dirigatur oratio.'

² A good account of this heresy will be found in Neander's *Church History*, Bohn's Standard Library, vol. iv. p. 492. Oddly enough, it is quite unnoticed in Mr. Blunt's *Dictionary of Sects and Heresies*, 1874.

³ 'Certe Ithacium nihil pensi, nihil sancti habuisse definitio. Fuit enim audax, loquax, impudens, sumptuosus, ventri et gulæ plurimum impertiens.'—*Sacree Historiæ*, lib. ii. cap. cl.; Amsterdam, Elzevir, p. 119, 1656.

strict or ascetic life under the suspicion of being heretics. This man, with some other bishops, so prosecuted the opposition to the heretics that, despite the protests of St. Martin of Tours and the indignation of St. Ambrose, Priscillian and many of his rich or powerful followers were beheaded.

The result of this was the spread of the evil. Priscillian was at once regarded as a martyr, and there was added to the other attractive subtleties of the sect the new impetus of enthusiastic admiration for the martyrdom of their chief leaders. For three hundred years and more this sect so tainted the Spanish Church, that for a person to come from Spain was quite sufficient to render him suspected of heresy. This is constantly seen in the History of St. Gregory of Tours, though he does not speak of the heresy under this name. On one occasion¹ an ambassador from Spain was passing through Tours on Easter Day, and he attended Mass at the Cathedral, but did not communicate; and at the feast afterwards in the 'Church-house,' St. Gregory cross-examined him because he suspected him of heresy, and his answers confirmed the suspicions.

Their heresy embraced errors about the full verity of the Incarnation, though they seem to have acknowledged some union of God with flesh; yet how far they admitted any possibility of suffering it is impossible to say. 'As' they denied the Resurrection of Christ, they must have denied either the susceptibility of His Body to injury, or the continuance of His corporeality. Against the latter alternative is the objection, that they can scarcely have been willing to give up a body derived from the Divine nature to the kingdom of earthly matter. But, in that case, Christ's Body, which is supposed not to have needed Resurrection, cannot have experienced injury and death; in the place of the Resurrection must be substituted the Ascension, and,

¹ *Historia Francorum*, lib. vi. cap. xl., Parisii, 1561, p. 358.

² *Dorner's Doctrine of the Person of Christ* (Clark's Library), div. i. vol. ii. p. 470.

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accordingly, His sufferings must undoubtedly be deemed Docetical.'

As a consequence of their errors about the Incarnation, there followed errors about the Blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood. It would seem that they degraded this to a kind of corollary to a preceding meal, founding their idea upon the example of the original institution. They therefore received the Communion in church, but reserved both species, and did not consume them with the rest. It may be that this was to partake at home after a meal, as we hear some Lombards were said to have done in the eighth century.¹ But they would seem to have claimed the annual Maundy before Communion on Maundy Thursday on their side, and celebration for the dead after food. All these customs were therefore condemned by Spanish councils with increasing severity. The not consuming in church, certainly harmless in itself, was condemned under perpetual anathema.² The custom of Maundy Thursday, familiar to the Churches on the shores of the Mediterranean, was also condemned in the following canons.

In the anathemas of the first Council of Braga (A.D. 563), the following is the sixteenth.³

Si quis quintâ feriâ Paschali quæ vocatur *Cæna Domini*, horâ legitimâ post nonam jejunos in Ecclesiâ missas non tenet, sed secundum sectam Priscilliani festivitatem ipsius diei ab horâ tertiâ per missas defunctorum soluto jejunió colit, anathema sit.

If anyone on the Thursday before Easter, which is called *Maundy* Thursday, does not have Mass at the lawful hour, after three o'clock in church, fasting, but, like the sect of Priscillian, celebrates the festival of that day after nine o'clock in the morning by Mass for the dead after he has broken his fast, Let him be anathema.

¹ So Pope Stephen III. (A.D. 755) writes to Pepin to enlist his sympathy against the invading Lombards.—*Baronii Annals*, Lucæ, 1742, tom. xii. p. 613.

² Co. Cæsaraugustanum I. (A.D. 381), can. iii.; Bruns, ii. p. 13.

³ Bruns, ii. p. 32.

The same is seen in the second Council of Braga, held nine years after the first (A.D. 572), which again condemns the Priscillianists, and on much the same grounds. For though in the fresh canon passed at the council there is no mention made of Maundy Thursday, and only Mass for the dead after food is condemned, yet in the same council there was a collection of old canons of various councils made, and these were re-enacted and re-enforced; and amongst them there reappears the Canon of Laodicea, condemning the breach of Lent by the Maundy on Maundy Thursday; and this breach of Lent, for the purpose (as it would seem) of lowering the teaching about the Blessed Sacrament, was anathematized at the first Council of Braga.

The tenth canon of the second Council of Braga under the renowned St. Martin is as follows: ¹—

Placuit ut quia per stultitiam præsumpti nuper erroris aut certe ex veteris Priscillianæ adhuc hæresis fætere corruptos cognovimus quosdam presbyteros in hujus præsumptionis audaciâ retineri, ut in missâ mortuorum² etiam post acceptum merum oblationem ausi sunt consecrare, ideo hoc præfixæ evidentis sententiæ admonitione servetur ut si quis presbyter post hoc edictum nostrum amplius in hâc vesaniâ fuerit reprehensus, id est, ut nec jejunus sed quocumque jam cibo præsumpto oblationem consecraverit in altari continuo ab officio suo

It seemed good that, since we learn that some priests, corrupted by the folly of a lately adopted error, or certainly from the foulness of the now old Priscillian heresy, are held in the audacity of this presumption that in Mass for the dead, even after they have taken unmixed wine, they have been bold to consecrate the oblation, on this account this should be observed by the admonition of the prefixed manifest sentence, that if any priest after this our edict be any more discovered in this madness, that is, that not fasting, but after any food

¹ Bruns, ii. p. 42.

² In the seventh century some Spanish priests used to say Mass for the dead publicly by name for those who were still alive, as a kind of curse on them.—Co. Toletan, xvii. (A.D. 694), can. v.

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The Church of Spain, then, because of the prevalence of the Priscillianist heresy, condemned the Maundy and any celebration for the dead after food within the limits of their jurisdiction. But this was not binding beyond Spain, for, as we shall see, the canon of Africa, accepting and recognizing (if not enforcing) the feasting before Communion on Maundy Thursday, was, just after this second Council of Braga, incorporated into one of the canons of the second Council of Mâcon in Gaul.¹ The Gallican bishops did not feel bound to give up the Maundy, because they were not troubled with the Priscillianist heresy at the time. If, then, the neighbouring Church, intimately connected with Spain as it was, passed a canon in A.D. 585, accepting the feast before Communion on Maundy Thursday, which had been condemned in A.D. 572 and A.D. 563, at Braga, these canons and anathemas of the eight or twelve bishops at Braga need not affect us in England after thirteen hundred years. The reservation of the Blessed Sacrament, permitted and applauded by many fathers, was condemned at Saragossa because of the Priscillianists; but this is not generally condemned now. The consecrating after food was condemned for the same reason, because of the Priscillianists; it need not follow that, where the Priscillianist heresy is not known, the condemnation is binding. At all events the fathers at Mâcon did not think so.

These canons are only for priests, as is also the canon of the sixth Council of Toledo in A.D. 646. It seems that at this time, partly owing to the advanced age of many of the Spanish bishops, there were constantly accidents arising

¹ Co. Mâcon II. (A.D. 585), can. vi.; Bruns, ii. p. 251.

from the fainting or illness of the celebrant. The bishops therefore determine that no priest or bishop is to attempt to consecrate without another priest at hand to take up the office if he faints. This, however, might be open to abuse; they therefore end a long canon thus :¹—

Lest, however, that which is recommended, by reason of the weakness of our nature, should be turned into the bane of presumption, let no man presume to offer Mass after taking any least portion of food or drink ; let no minister or priest leave the office unfinished when he have commenced it without patent symptoms of uneasiness ; if any presume upon this rashly, he will incur the sentence of excommunication.

This again affected Spanish priests ; but however interesting it be historically to us now in England, there can be no question that it has no binding force on the consciences of English priests or laymen.

SECTION 4.—*The Gallican Canons.*

COUNCIL OF AUXERRE, A.D. 578. SECOND COUNCIL OF MÂCON, A.D. 585.

Just about the time that the Spanish councils of Braga were condemning the Maundy and all communicating after food, two Gallican councils considered the same question, though the result they came to was slightly different. There was some reason for this ; for both Auxerre and Mâcon, where the councils in question were held, were at some distance from Spain, and therefore were more free from fear of Priscillianist infection. Still, in the sixth century the state of morals in Gaul does not seem to have been very high. No one can read the History of St. Gregory of Tours without perceiving this. He declares that it is unpleasant to him to be an accuser of his brethren ; but it was like people like priest, for the times were certainly characterized by great license. It may be said that the

¹ Bruns, i. p. 262.

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The times were certainly evil times. We read in St. Gregory that one bishop was murdered in church during the office on Easter Morning; ¹ another bishop was poisoned as he rises to go to vigil on Christmas Eve; ² another bishop had made great preparation to keep his birthday with a rich entertainment, ³ when he was set upon by two brother bishops and their men, who tore his clothes, killed his servants, took off all he had prepared for the feast, and left the poor bishop 'in grandi contumeliâ.' These two bishops were warlike, and donned their coats of mail and went to war. ⁴ When their offended brother complained, the two were deposed at a synod of Lyons; but they went to Rome and said they were unjustly treated, and the Pope ordered their immediate restoration, which took place. They then made it up with Bishop Victor, whom they had thus insulted; but for a time Bishop Victor suffered for his forgiving disposition, for the council of bishops excommunicated him for privately making up a quarrel on account of which he had publicly accused the others. The two bishops went on from bad to worse, and finished disgracefully a course of luxurious immorality.

St. Gregory himself was abused by another bishop about some property in question between them, and Gregory gives his answer, which says that he will not imitate the scurrilous language of his brother bishop; and goes on, 'Oh, if Marseilles had you for a bishop, the ships would never bring thither oil nor other merchandise, but would be wholly employed in bringing you paper that you might have greater opportunity for defaming the good!'⁵

¹ *Historia Francorum*, lib. viii. cap. xxxi., Parisiis, 1561, p. 466.

² *Ibid.* lib. iii. cap. xvii. 1561, p. 138.

³ *Ibid.* lib. v. cap. xx. 1561, p. 254.

⁴ *Ibid.* lib. iv. cap. xliii. 1561, p. 197; lib. vii. cap. xxxvii. p. 417.

⁵ *Ibid.* lib. v. cap. v. p. 221.

Altogether they were very rough times, and strong measures were very necessary to ensure reverence in church. For the house of prayer was not safe from violence; fighting spread into the churches, and men's lives were nowhere safe. On one occasion, Guntchramnus, the king, who had escaped many attempts at assassination, addressed the people in church, and asked them not to murder him, as his brothers had been so lately murdered.¹

In these times, too, the bishops and clergy were not free from being addicted to much wine. We cannot, therefore, be surprised to find that the Council of Auxerre would not allow any of the clergy to be present even at Mass after they had touched any food: for it was quite clear that if they did they would probably go on to excess. In the case of the first canons which were framed on the subject of Fasting Communion, we have seen that there was grievous liability to excess among the African Christians, which was the cause of the first passing the canon that men must communicate before taking the *prandium*. So now again, in the case of the two Gallican canons on the subject, if the Church in Gaul was free from suspicion of Priscillianist heresy at the time, yet it was not free from habits of excess. There was therefore good reason that the Council of Auxerre in A.D. 578 should pass the following canon: ²—

It is not lawful for priest, or deacon, or subdeacon, after he has taken food or drink, to handle (*tradare*) the Mass, nor to stay in church while Mass is being said.

This canon is like the Anglo-Saxon canon in the tenth century, which ruled that no one was to take any food before he had attended High Mass and had heard the sermon. The Gallican canon refuses to allow anyone in Holy Orders to be present at Mass if he has taken any food. This could only be in prospect of excess, because no one could

¹ *Hist. lib. vii. cap. viii. p. 381.*

² Canon xix. Bruns, ii. p. 239.

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pretend that there was any symbolism about hearing Mass before food was taken. Nor can it be said that it was to compel all to communicate with the officiant ;¹ for there is no word of that, and as communicating is included in 'tractare Missas,' the latter part would be superfluous. But it is distinctly forbidden for any person in Holy Orders to be present in church if he has taken food previously. I have not learned that anyone is desirous of enforcing the latter part of the canon ; indeed, generally, as in Mr. Blunt's 'Dictionary of Theology,' the latter part is omitted. Now it is quite true that one part of a canon may be abrogated by disuser and another part may be still in force. But then the part in force will either be found continuously recognized in some rubric of an office book or in the bishop's visitations, or it will have been incorporated in some fresh code of canons, which gives it renewed vitality. But nothing of this is claimed for this canon : both limbs or clauses therefore stand on the same ground so far as members of the English Church are concerned, and it is preposterous to quote one part as binding, and to ignore the other. Both parts were no doubt equally necessary at the time for the sake of reverence, and the necessity of both has passed away in England.

The second Council of Mâcon was called together by the King's writ to depose a bishop, and in the canons issued by them there was one about the fast before Communion, which is as follows :—

Item we decree that no presbyter stuffed with food or drunken with wine presume to handle the sacrifices (*contractare sacrificia*) or to celebrate Mass on private or festival days, for it is not fitting that bodily food should be placed before spiritual ; but if any have

¹ Such, however, is the opinion of Cardinal Bona, whose authority is very great. (*Rerum Liturgicarum*, lib. i. cap. xxi. § 2, Ed. Sala, vol. ii. p. 108.) The heading of the canon is, 'Ut missæ a jejunis clericis celebrentur et audiantur ;' which shows what the opinion of the scribe was who added these headings, though, as it is uncertain when they were added, it is not wise to attach too much authority to them.

of set purpose attempted this, let him lose his rank of honour. For already in such a question it has been defined in African Councils, which definition we have thought fit to add to our decree, and here:—'That the sacraments of the altar be celebrated only by fasting men, the one yearly day being excepted when the *Lord's Supper* is celebrated.' Whatever residue of the sacrifices have remained over in the sacarium after the celebration of Mass, let children be brought to the church, on Wednesday or Friday, by him whose duty it is, and a fast having been enjoined them, let them receive the same residue with wine poured over.

There is much here of interest; but first remark the strong language with which the canon commences. '*Confertus cibo aut crapulatus vino.*' This of itself must show that it was excess that was aimed at, especially as we see the canon pointedly adopts Communion after a meal on Maundy Thursday. This strong language probably has reference to the terrible case of irreverence and impiety related by St. Gregory of Tours.¹ He tells us that a priest who was keeping vigil kept drinking all night, yet, at the time of celebration, he was chosen to be celebrant on account of his social position. Sodden with wine as he was he consecrated, but fell down in an epileptic fit. Here was the real occurrence of impiety arising from excess; and it may well be that this canon was expressly framed in consequence of this judgment upon such impiety. For St. Gregory of Tours himself was present at this council, as he tells us, and argued with a bishop who maintained that *homo* did not include *mulier*. He that records this instance of Divine judgment may well have urged the framing of the canon, and the strong language may have arisen from the abhorrence of the bishops of such an act of impious presumption.

Then again, remark how the language implies that no such rule had obtained before in Gaul: '*Jam enim de*

¹ *De Glorâ Martyrum*, lib. i. cap. lxxxvii. Paris, 1699, col. 819.

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tali causá et in conciliis Africanis definitum est.' It has been already defined in Africa, and we do no more than accept their definition. This is not the language of men who were cognizant of a rule or custom binding on the conscience before they issue the canon, but it is rather the language of those who were adopting a new rule to be binding for the future.

There is also clear proof that the Gallican fathers knew no earlier canon or rule or custom than the Canon of Hippo, which, as we have seen, first formulated the rule because of the prevalent excess. The fathers of the council say not, this ancient rule of the Church issuing from the Apostles we insist on with greater severity, but they say, this decree we make, and it is no new one, for it has been already decreed in Africa.

The latter part of the canon having respect to the reverent consumption of the remainder of the consecrated elements, with the injunction of a subsequent fast, is very interesting, and will be spoken of again. In the mean time, if the canon is now to be regarded as in force, the exception of the Maundy Thursday Communion after food also holds good. And it might be said the subsequent fast is also compulsory; for if a subsequent fast were necessary for 'innocentes,' how much more for adults. But none would be probably found to say that it is binding in its entirety; therefore it must all fall together in England. For there is nothing to maintain among us the vigour of one limb of the canon any more than another. The canon, full of historic interest as it is, is altogether lacking in binding vigour.

SECTION 5.—*The Quinisext Canon.*

A.D. 692.

The fifth and sixth general councils had been busied wholly with canons of faith and doctrine, and had separated without issuing any canons of discipline. This was felt to

be a deficiency, to remedy which a council was held at Constantinople in A.D. 692. It is now known by two names, one which takes its origin from the reason of the meeting of the council, and the other from the place where it met. It is called Quinisext¹ because it is a quasi supplement to the fifth and sixth councils; and it is called the Trullan Council because it met in the domed chamber, or Trullus, of the Imperial Palace at Constantinople.

It was intended to hold rank as a general council, and it assembled with all the éclat due to such an assembly. But many of its canons established the fact that there was a divergence between the discipline of East and West, and thus prepared a way for the great schism. One great point of divergence was the question of the marriage of the clergy. While the fathers of the council refused to allow bishops to live with their wives, if they had been previously married; and while they refused to allow a priest after his ordination to enter holy matrimony; yet they permitted priests to live with their wives, except at certain times of their ministrations. At the same time they rejected from Holy Orders anyone who had in any way, either by himself or his wife, countenanced a second marriage. No man was to be eligible for Holy Orders who had married a second time, or married one who was a widow or had acted as if she had been married.²

Here there was a considerable divergence from the discipline of Rome. But still further the old rule of the East, that Saturday should never be fasted, even in Lent, except on Easter Eve, was now insisted on as compulsory,³ and Old Rome was called upon to change her time-honoured custom of fasting on Saturday. This was not only displeasing to the Bishop of Old Rome, but he regarded it as an insult; and though his legates seem to have

¹ It is called *σύνοδος πενθέκτη*, concilium quinisextum.

² Canon iii.

³ Canon lv.

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signed the canons of the council, yet the Pope of Rome refused to accept or recognize them ; and they have never been regarded in the West as of binding force. If, then, any canons of the council are quoted or referred to by western writers, it is more by way of illustration or example than as to authoritative documents.

The council considered the question of the African canon on Fasting Communion and its exception on Maundy Thursday. The exception had been reckoned as a breach of the Lenten strictness, and it seemed to recognize the propriety of breaking Lent on one of the days in Holy Week. This license had been condemned in the middle of the fourth century at the Council of Laodicea ; but St. Augustine showed that indeed there need be no breach of Lent, for a man might make the evening meal his Maundy, and communicate afterwards. Still the temptation to avoid strictness led to men taking the prandium on this day and communicating afterwards. This was the case in some instances, as we have seen, in the Spanish Church, and the Priscillianist heretics fostered the habit. The fathers at Constantinople therefore abolish anything which would seem to interfere with Lenten strictness ; but they do not annul the Maundy as a meal before Communion. They re-enact the canon of the Council of Laodicea, using the same words ; but they do not condemn communicating after food on that day. They formulate their rule as follows :¹—

The canon of the fathers at Carthage declares that the things of the holy Altar are not to be celebrated except by fasting men, with the exception of one annual day when the *Lord's Supper* is celebrated, when perhaps those holy fathers used such a policy at that particular time for certain local reasons profitable to the Church. Since, however, there is nothing urging us to forsake our stringency, we, following the traditions of the Apostles and Fathers, determine that men ought not to relax the Thursday in the last week of Lent, and dishonour the whole Lent.

¹ Canon xxix. Bruns, i. p. 46.

There is no word here of the question being thus decided because of any supposed dishonour to the Blessed Sacrament, but it is out of honour for the Lenten fast; and this is seen from the reference to the traditions of the Apostles and Fathers. For, as the Greek commentators point out, these references are to the canons of the Apostles and to the Council of Laodicea. The canons of the Apostles (which the council had already accepted as binding¹) with no faltering utterance insist upon the keeping of Lent;² and the Council of Laodicea condemned any breach of the strictness of the Lenten fast on Maundy Thursday. The council therefore says that it acknowledges the binding force of these canons rather than that of Africa, which seems at all events, and had been held by some, to sanction a breach of Lent.

If therefore we are to regard the canon of the Quinisext Council as being of any force, it does not at all forbid the Communion after meat on Maundy Thursday. There is not one word about this; but it forbids any such departure from the Lenten strictness as was thought to be implied in the African canon. This canon, as we shall see, was held to permit the taking of a *prandium* on Maundy Thursday, and St. Augustine in his explanation of the canon seems to acknowledge that such was its force: but at the same time he shows that it was quite possible to observe Lent and yet communicate after food, by going to the oblation after the usual meal at three o'clock in the afternoon. This suggestion of St. Augustine is not condemned by the Quinisext canon, for it does not involve a breach of Lent.

This then shows that in the mind of the fathers at Constantinople in A.D. 692 there was not the same opinion

¹ Canon ii.

² 'If any bishop, or presbyter, or deacon, or reader, or singer fast not the holy forty days [before] Easter, or on Wednesday or Friday, unless he be hindered by bodily infirmity, let him be deposed; if he be a layman, let him be excommunicated.'—*Ap. Can. lxi.*; Bruns, i. p. 10; Beveridge, *Codex Canonum A.D.* 1678, p. 456.

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as now exists among some, that to take any food whatever
between the stroke of midnight and the act of Communion
is in itself a dishonour to the Blessed Sacrament.

This also is seen probably in the canon of the same
council, which allows the Easter Eve fast to cease at mid-
night of Easter Morning. If the same canon had said that
the celebration was to be at midnight, and that this was to
be the breach of the fast ; or if it had said that men were
not to communicate upon Easter Day after they had broken
their fast at midnight, there could have been no question
on the subject. But the fathers say nothing of this: they
simply say that men may cease fasting at midnight. We
must remember that too much stress must not be laid upon
this argument, as we cannot with sufficient certainty (so far
as I know) decide the time of the celebration at Easter.
According to the Benedictine editors, we find St. Chrysos-
tom speaking of a celebration in the evening of Good
Friday, which is a warning to us not to speak too positively
about the customs of those times. The answer of Dionysius
of Alexandria is quite different, for he gives two distinct
hours for breaking the fast—midnight and three o'clock in
the morning ; and as there was but one celebration then, so
far as any evidence goes, there could have been no rigorist
rule of not eating after midnight before Communion.¹

But as the fathers at Constantinople did not condemn
the communicating after a meal on Maundy Thursday, but
only the breach of the Lenten fast, it is evident that there
did not exist then the same rigorist view as is adopted at
present by some of our brethren in the English priest-
hood.

Either, then, we may say that the Quinisext canon is no
longer binding, whether because it was never received, or
because of its desuetude ; or we must allow that it does not
condemn Communion after food on Maundy Thursday.

¹ Bruns, *Canones*, i. p. 61 ; *Σύνταγμα κανόνων*, tom. iv. p. 1.

SECTION 6.—*The Canon of Constance.*

A.D. 1415.

Mr. Poyntz,¹ in his valuable pamphlet, cites a canon of the Council of Constance as binding upon the consciences of Englishmen now.

The subject was again brought up at the Council of Constance, in 1415, when it was enacted as follows :—'The praiseworthy authority of the sacred canons and the approved custom of the Church has held and still holds that a Sacrament of this kind ought not to be celebrated after supper, nor received by the faithful who are not fasting, except in case of infirmity or other necessity, or a right either granted or admitted by the Church.' This is the latest decision on the subject, and the one that should govern our practice ; for the English Church was represented at Constance, and, according to the admitted rule, this canon, not having been repealed, is still in force.

On this passage it must be remarked, that if the arguments of this essay are true, there are two errors in the last sentence: first, that the presence of representative bishops at a council binds the Church represented ; and secondly, that all unrepealed canons are in full vigour.²

First, Mr. Poyntz says that if a Church be represented at a council, it is therefore bound by the conclusions of that council. We have seen that this has not always held. The Church of Britain was not bound by the Council of Arles in A.D. 315, though represented there by three bishops who signed the canons. The West did not receive the canons of the Quinisext Council in A.D. 692, though represented there by legates from Rome, who also, as

¹ *The Fast before Communion discussed and shown to be dispensable on Principles of Canon Law.* By the Rev. Newdigate Poyntz, M.A. London, Palmer, 1872, p. 9.

² 'As, for instance, the Synod of Arles in France is said to have had three British bishops present at it, and yet we are sure the canons there made were not received in Britain.'—Johnson's *Vade-Mecum*, vol. ii. p. cx.

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the Greeks assert, and as Anastasius, the librarian of the Vatican,¹ acknowledges (writing about A.D. 870), signed the canons there passed. The disciplinary canons of Trent were not universally received. Nor, indeed, is the Church of England bound by the Synod of Dort, however much some Calvinists would wish to make it out. It need not follow, therefore, that because the English were represented at Constance, all the canons of discipline then passed are now binding on the English Church.

Next, Mr. Poyntz says that it is 'an admitted rule' that an unrepealed canon still binds. This rule is not admitted, if by 'repealed' a distinct contrary enactment of a council is meant. As has been seen, disuser with the silent consent of the bishop, even for forty years, is held by the canonist Gibert to annul and make void a canon.

But now for the canon of the Council of Constance itself: to understand this, we must enquire into its history,² which is most instructive.

Complaint was made to the council that Jacobel de Misa, parish priest of St. Michael, in Prague, had established Communion under both kinds, and that his example had been followed by other churches. The council referred the matter to their theologians, who, after much discussion, reported their decision under six conclusions, which were as follows:—

1. The Lord instituted the Eucharist under two kinds.
2. It was a praiseworthy custom not to administer this Sacrament after supper, except to invalids.
3. Though it was the custom of the primitive Church to

¹ He says they were surprised into doing so. Fleury, *Histoire Ecclesiastique*, Paris, 1703, tom. ix. p. 119; *Abrégé Chronologique*, Paris, 1768, tom. i. p. 502; Van Espen, in *Jus Canonicum*, Lovanii, 1753, tom. iii. p. 359.

² The authorities here relied upon are as follows:—Hardouin, *Acta Conciliorum*, Paris, 1714, tom. viii. col. 381; Von der Hardt, *Corpus Actorum Magni Constantiensis Concilii*, tom. iii. 626, iv. 334; Lenfant, *Histoire du Concile de Constance*, Amsterdam, 1727, tom. i.; Fleury, *Histoire Ecclesiastique*, tom. xxi. p. 321, Paris, 1726.

communicate under the two kinds, yet, to avoid all risk, it was lawful to introduce the custom of communicating the laity under the species of bread only.

4. This custom, observed for so long a time, ought to pass for a law, which none ought to disapprove or change without the authority of the Church.

5. He who says that it is unlawful to observe this custom is in error.

6. Those who wilfully maintain the contrary ought to be reckoned as heretics, and as such repressed and punished.

The council then formulated these conclusions into a canon, part of which is quoted by Mr. Poyntz.

Now there is no trace whatever that any complaint or representation was made to the council that the Eucharist was celebrated after supper.¹ Jacobel, in his answer, asserts this. It is quite true that Lenfant finds in a MS. that there were floating rumours, totally devoid of foundation, that the Wickliffites and Hussites were in the habit of such profanation: but he says that there is no trace in the records of the council, nor in the history of the times, that such a thing was practised or reported to the council. Nor, indeed, is it alluded to in the short heading of the canon. The headings of the request for the decree, the decree, and the sanction of the canon,² run as follows:—

Condemnation of the Communion of the laity under both kinds of bread and wine is asked for.

Condemnation of Communion under two kinds lately revived among the Bohemians by Jacobel de Misa.

That no presbyter, under pain of excommunication, communicate the people under both kinds of bread and wine.

It is quite clear from this, that the question of celebration after supper is introduced only by way of argu-

¹ Lenfant, tom. i. p. 370.

² Von der Hardt, *loc. cit.*

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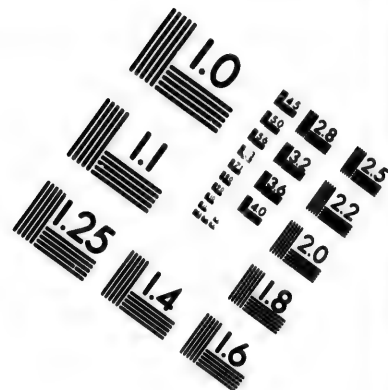
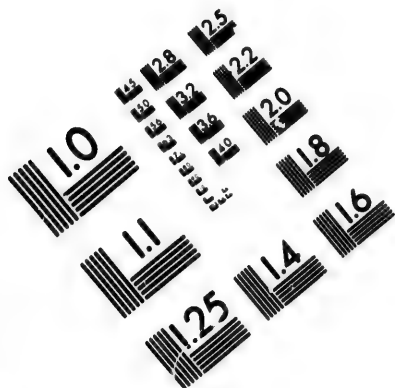
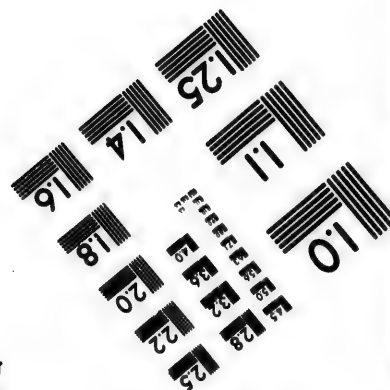
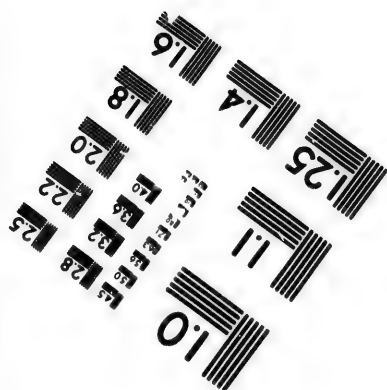
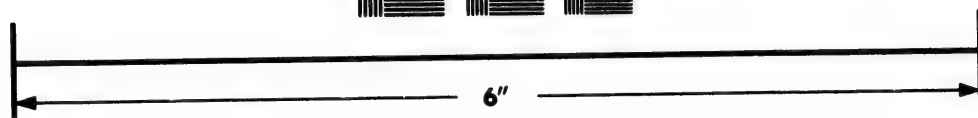
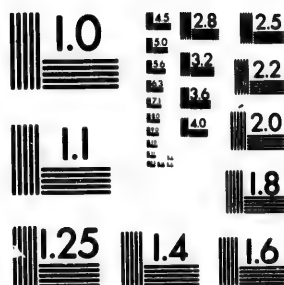


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ment; just as afterwards Bossuet, defending Communion under one kind, argues that, as some other attendant ceremonies, such as posture of communicants, and their number, &c., had been changed, so might the giving of the cup be also changed. The theologians of the council were clearly anxious to adduce some parallel to the interference with the *rite* as it had been instituted. True, they say, it was instituted in two kinds, but it was also instituted after supper. The Church has altered the latter, with general consent, therefore it has power to alter the former. That this was the reason of the introducing the question of communicating after supper may also be seen from one of the treatises published by command of the council. Maurice of Prague wrote (A.D. 1417) in answer to Jacobel; and, amongst other arguments, he cited certain points wherein the Church had altered the institution of our blessed Lord, and the four points he insists on are these. The Church has broken the Lord's institution or command,—

1. By communicating fasting.
2. By using leavened bread.
3. By enforcing celibacy on priests.
4. By allowing laity, and even women, to baptize.

It is clear, then, that the matter in hand was the denial of the Cup to the laity, and that the question of Fasting Communion was only introduced as an argument in favour of the power of the Church to alter the institution of our Lord. Indeed, Lenfant writes that it is not at all clear whether the council meant to condemn communicating after supper, or after any food at all: it did not care to make it clear, for it was only used as an argument to bolster up the monstrous decision to withhold the cup.

Now the Church of England (thank God!) has deliberately put aside the enactment of the Council of Constance, refusing the cup to the laity, which is the special enactment of the canon. This has been done by intro-

ducing the contrary practice, by inserting rubrics directing the giving of the cup, and by asserting in a public document that 'the cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay people.' It might well be said that, as the main enactment of the canon has been repealed by the Church of England, the arguments which were employed to support the enactment will fall with it; just as when a judgment is reversed, all *obiter dicta* uttered in giving judgment lose whatever value they ever had, - and that, say all lawyers, is nothing at all.

But, whatever may be said on that score, the words of the canon of Constance may be used in England against the binding force of the rule of Fasting Communion. For it must be evident that the language of the canon is very carefully worded; and worded according to the rules laid down by canonists in order that a custom may have force of law. The argument of the canon will therefore hold for any contrary custom which has obtained; for the whole canon or decree of the council runs thus:—

Although Christ instituted this venerable Sacrament after supper, and administered to his disciples under both kinds of bread and wine; yet this notwithstanding, the excellent authority of the ancient canons, and the approved custom of the Church, have held, and hold, that this Sacrament ought not to be celebrated after supper, nor be received by the faithful who are not fasting, except in case of infirmity or otherwise of necessity of right yielded or acknowledged by the Church. And just as this custom was reasonably introduced for the avoiding certain dangers and scandals, so by a like or greater reason it could be introduced and reasonably observed, that, although in the primitive Church this Sacrament was received by the faithful under two kinds, yet since then it should be received by the celebrants under both kinds, and by the laity under the species of bread only: since it is most firmly to be believed, and in no wise to be doubted, that the whole Body and Blood of Christ are truly contained as well under the species of Bread as under the species of Wine. Whence, since this custom has been reasonably introduced by the Church and holy fathers, and has been observed for a very long time, it is

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to be regarded as a law which none may disapprove or alter at his own will, without the authority of the Church. Wherefore it ought to be thought erroneous to say that it is sacrilegious or unlawful to observe this custom or law; and those that obstinately [*pertinaciter*] assert the opposite of the foregoing are to be restrained as heretics, and severely punished by their diocesans.

Here the denial of the Cup to the laity is said to be a custom against the institution of the Lord, reasonably introduced, and observed '*diutissimè*,' for a very long time; this *custom* is therefore to be regarded as a law, the obstinate impugning of which is to be held and punished as heresy. Let us change the wording slightly and say, the practice of receiving the Blessed Sacrament after a slight meal, to support health in a cold climate, is a custom *not* against the institution of the Lord, reasonably introduced into England to prevent neglect of Communion, observed '*diutissimè*,' for as long a time at least as the denial of the Cup to the laity had been at the time of the Council of Constance; it is, therefore, of equal force with a law, the obstinate impugning of which is to be held as a heresy!

For we must remember that if the Church of England has power to introduce a custom of granting the Cup to the laity, contrary to the enactment of Constance, and contrary to the practice and custom of the West, there will also be a power to allow other customs, if they be not '*contra bonos mores*,' or against the express rule of Holy Scripture. However, therefore, we must sympathize with the matter and manner of Mr. Poyntz in his pamphlet, it must be said that it is unfair and misleading to tell us that a fragment of the argument of a canon is '*still in force*,' as binding on the conscience, when the enactment of the canon itself has been flung to the winds. If the custom of breaking the fast by such a light meal as is not unusual in England before Communion is unlawful, so as to be a '*mortal sin*,' as some say now-a-days, and if this

depends on this Canon of Constance now, then there can be no question that to give the Cup to the laity is a heresy. For the Church of England has not refused to communicate the faithful after breakfast, and if this disuser of our Church for three centuries have not voided the contrary custom of its binding force, there is no power to repeal the Canon of Constance, and we are still guilty of *heresy* in giving the Cup to the laity! If, however, there is power to grant the Cup to the laity, the Pope notwithstanding, then the power to authorize a local custom will be present also. It must be still remembered that the sole argument now is, that Fasting Communion is not so binding on the conscience that to deviate from the practice is a mortal sin, or a breach of canon law.

Those, then, that insist upon Fasting Communion as a means of breaking down one bar to union in the West, must be more eager to deny the Cup to the laity, the giving of which is condemned as a heresy. Indeed, some years ago a parish priest was speaking of the custom then springing up of not giving the Cup into the hands of the communicants, and told the writer of this essay that it was a good plan, as preparatory to, or as next to, the refusing the Cup. In many quarters it is said that some are not (as a matter of fact) communicated in the Cup, and the writer has seen one person leave the altar before attempting to receive the Cup. It is well, therefore, to see beforehand whither we are drifting.

Ever since the Lord Jesus condescended to have a history to be measured and tested by human criticism, history has been consecrated to our use. History tells us that the Church Catholic is made up of particular local Churches whose customs have varied without breach of unity. History and the canons of the Church show that particular Churches may have their own liturgies, and introduce alterations in them; may have customs differing at different times, without there being any necessary

now, then there can be no doubt that the laity is a heresy. If refused to communion, if this disuser of our power voided the contrary, to power to repeal the all guilty of *heresy* in however, there is power notwithstanding, custom will be present at the sole argument not so binding on the practice is a mortal sin,

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danger to inter-communion. History tells us that canons of discipline, and customs unsanctioned by or unenforced by canons, have been constantly allowed to fall into disuse by particular Churches without endangering unity. If, therefore, we believe that the Church of England is indeed a living part of the True Vine, we need not fear to accept her relaxation of an ancient custom, when the reason of that custom has been removed by entire change of manners.

For if we hope that giving way on some minor points will bring us nearer to communion with the main body of the Western Church, it is to be feared that history will tell us that the arrogance of Rome has been gradually on the increase, and that nothing will serve our purpose but unconditional submission. To threats of excommunication, however, history will give us the vigorous remonstrance of the French bishops: 'Excommunicaturus venies? excommunicatus abibis.'

SECTION 7.—*The supposed Canon of Nicæa.*

The authority of the first Council of Nicæa was paramount and transcendent.¹ Its prestige was of course very great. It was the first general council of the Church; it was attended by representative bishops from all parts of the world; some were bishops who had borne the brunt of persecution — some who had been tortured even with the loss of some member; and the Emperor Constantine himself was there. It had all the prestige that confessorship and constancy could give it in the eyes of devout Christians, and that the presence of the Court could give it in the eyes of the worldly. The result was that its authority was unquestioned. No one who wished to be reckoned as a member of the Catholic Church refused to receive its determinations

¹ For a concise view of this see Pusey, *Councils of the Church*, 1857, p. 109.

with the utmost respect.¹ Some professed such regard for them that they spoke of them in language which falls little short of that used of the inspired Scriptures. Men regarded them as next in authority to the Gospels;² and our own homilies speak of them as 'allowed and received of all men.'³

Such being the case, it is no wonder that in any controversies one side or other cited the authority of the Council of Nicæa in their favour. Nor is it to be wondered at that many canons and rules are attributed to the council which are not to be found in the approved lists. At one time the Pope claimed to hear appeals from all Metropolitans by authority of this council.⁴ At another Gratian⁵ incorporated into his *Decretum* canons as of Nicæa which are unknown to history. A Jesuit discovered that by accident the world had forgotten some twenty-four canons of this council,⁶ which extolled the honour and glory of the Pope of Rome above other bishops, and he was good enough to publish them. While another learned man⁷ found out that everyone had been wrong for some thirteen hundred years, and that the true canons were eighty-four in number, as he had found out from an Arabic Manuscript.

It is, therefore, to be expected that some would assert⁸

¹ The African bishops said in A.D. 419, 'Quod statutum est in Nicæno concilio violari a quoquam nullatenus potest.'—Bruns, *Canones*, i. p. 159.

² 'Sicut Sancti Evangelii quatuor libros sic quatuor concilia accipere et venerari me fateor.'—St. Gregory, Ep. xxv. (al. 24); *Opera*, Parisiis, 1705, tom. ii. col. 515 B.

³ Second part of the Sermon against peril of Idolatry.

⁴ See Bruns, *Canones*, i. p. 157. A list of supposed lost canons, and among them one on Fasting Communion, is given in *Summa Conciliorum*, Auctore R. P. F. Longo a Coriolano, Parisiis, 1639, p. 68.

⁵ *Gratiani Canones Genuini ab Apocryphis discreti*, Opera C. S. Berardi; Matriti, 1783, tom. i. p. 69.

⁶ A summary of these canons will be found in Carranza, *Summa omnium Conciliorum et Pontificum*, Parisiis, 1668, p. 849.

⁷ These are discussed by Berardi, tom. i. p. 70 sq., and a summary of them is given by Carranza, p. 852.

⁸ This has been done; e.g. Giustiniani says, in his Commentary upon 1 Cor. xi. 20, 'Quin etiam Patres Concilii Carthaginensis affirmant, hanc consuetudinem percipiendi Eucharistiam ante omnem cibum fuisse in Concilio Nicæno firmatum.'—*Explanationes in omnes B. Pauli Epistolas*, Lugduni, 1612, tom.

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that Fasting Communion was insisted on at the first general Council of Nicæa.

But the anxiety which led some in ancient days to attempt to support their claims with the authority of this great council, was also of avail in quickening the critical faculty of their opponents; so that in early times the number and authenticity of the canons were severely scrutinized. Thus when the Bishop of Rome claimed to hear appeals from Africa under shelter of the Council of Nicæa, the African bishops, not finding the canon cited in their copy of the canons, sent for authenticated copies from the Eastern Patriarchs.

This was done in the so-called sixth Council of Carthage held A.D. 419.¹ Before this council were read the twenty canons from the text brought back to the African Church by Cæcilianus, Bishop of Carthage, who himself had been present at the council and had subscribed its decrees. This authentic copy had been preserved in the archives of the Church of Carthage, and had always been regarded as accurate by the Africans. But the canons alleged by the legates of Zosimus, Bishop of Rome, were not to be found among them: and when the legates protested that the African copy was defective and that the text of the Patriarch of Rome was more likely to be correct, the African bishops, at the suggestion of St. Augustine, agreed to accept the Roman text while they sent to

i. p. 561. Gavanti also says in his Commentary on the Rubrics (pars iii. tit. ix. Venetiis, 1769, tom. i. p. 210), 'Ubi [i.e. Co. Carthag. III. 48] assertitur in concilio Nicæno fuisse hanc eandem consuetudinem servandi Eucharistiam ante omnem cibum, confirmatam: non aiunt institutam quibus tenet ab Apostolis.' Sala too, in his notes upon Bona (*Opera*, 1749, tom. ii. p. 111, note 1), commits himself to the same statement, which the Cardinal was too learned to admit into his text.

¹ This has been given in every Church history at some length. The whole is discussed by Van Espen in his *Dissertation on the African Synods*, § 10, *Opera*, Lovanii, 1753, tom. iii. p. 272. See also Berardi, tom. i. p. 71. Mr. Allies showed the bearing of the whole question upon the position of the English Church in his *Church of England cleared from Schism*, ed. ii. 1848, p. 130 sq.

Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch for certified copies.¹ Properly authenticated copies were sent from Constantinople by Atticus the patriarch, and from Alexandria by the patriarch Cyril. These copies agreed in number and substance with the original copy lodged at Carthage by the Metropolitan of Africa on his return from the council.

From this we learn that the canons were twenty in number, and that none but these twenty were regarded as genuine at the commencement of the fifth century, ninety years after the council was held.² We can scarcely suppose that a Christian bishop would knowingly and wittingly³ have falsified the Code of Nicæa, but probably his assertion arose from ignorance. The code of canons as he had it was probably so written that the canons of Sardica followed close on these of Nicæa under the same heading; and the carelessness of the scribe was not corrected by the learning of the Bishop of Rome, who therefore protested that his book was right and that the canon of Sardica was a veritable canon of Nicæa.

By this and many other suchlike historical proofs it may be shown that historians are right in ascribing no more than twenty canons to the Council of Nicæa, and that other canons claiming this prerogative have no right to the

¹ Alypius, the friend of St. Augustine, proposed to send to the Eastern patriarchs, saying that the original documents of Nicæa were said to be at Constantinople. St. Augustine, with becoming respect for the Roman patriarch, suggested that they should take his word till they learnt whether there was ground for his statement or not. The Council asked the Eastern patriarchs for 'Exemplaria verissima Concilii Nicæni sub adstipulatione litterarum suarum.'—Bruns, *Canones*, i. p. 160.

² The same is seen from the numbering the first canon of Ancyra 21 in the Code of Canons acknowledged in the Council of Chalcedon. See above, p. 38.

³ Archbishop De Marca asserts that it was vain to think the excuse given in the text will hold, and says, 'Perhaps we shall approach nearer the truth if we say that Zosimus was somehow compelled to quote the Sardican canons under the name of the Nicene Council, since Innocent I. had openly said that the Church used no other canons than those of Nicæa in judging ecclesiastical causes; as well as that no Sardican Synod was known to the Africans beside that which was held by the Arians, as Augustine witnesses in his 163rd letter.'

—*De Concordantiâ*, lib. vii. cap. xvi. § 1; *Opera*, Bambergæ, 1788, tom. iii. p. 353.

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title. The canons gathered by the Jesuit Alphonsus Pisanus are selections from the letters of Pope Julius invented by the pseudo-Isidore. The Arabic canons are interesting and contain much no doubt that is very ancient, and much that is agreeable to the discipline of the early Church, but they have no right to any authority as canons of the first general council.¹

But if they might be all reckoned in this category, and if, in addition to these hundred and odd canons, all the spurious canons in Gratian be reckoned as genuine, still there would be no word of Fasting Communion from beginning to end. This is the more remarkable since the man who took upon him to write some letters, that Pope Soter ought to have written but did not, inserts in them a rule of fasting before celebration.

There is indeed so much known about the council that it is hard to believe that any considerable rule or practice which was then acknowledged or discussed has been since lost to history. Historians have preserved anecdotes of it; synodal letters to several sees remain; the twenty acknowledged canons have been published in every code of canons in Greek or Latin; they have been discussed by fathers, analyzed by canonists, scrutinized by controversialists, sifted by critics; and it is impossible to suppose that so important a rule as that of Fasting Communion could have escaped notice in all this scrutiny.

What, then, is the authority for the assertion that Fasting Communion was insisted on at the Council of Nicæa? An obscure utterance of two bishops at an uncertain council of Africa. I call it an obscure utterance, for as it stands the grammar is rather puzzling and the meaning uncertain. Indeed John Johnson boldly says,² 'I have omitted what is here mentioned concerning the Council of Nice, because I

¹ On the number of the genuine canons of Nicæa see Van Espen, *Dissertatio in primam Synodum Nicæam*, § 12; *Opera*, Lovanii, 1753, tom. iii. p. 78.

² *Clergyman's Vade-Mecum*, ed. 3rd, 1723, tom. ii. p. 187.

don't find that anyone has been able to penetrate into the meaning of the fathers as to that particular.' The Greek interpreter has altered the text to make it better sense, but probably he has wholly mistaken the meaning. I say that the utterance was at an uncertain council of Africa, for Van Espen¹ justly calls the canons of the so-called Third Council of Carthage (at which it first appears) a very farrago of matter gathered from several Councils of Africa, tinkered and corrupted by that monster of forgery the pseudo-Isidore.

It may be that the passage has somewhat suffered in its transmission from antiquity, but for the present we must take it as we find it and see what is the real meaning so far as it appears. It is a kind of extract from the acts of a council and has been appended to a canon, whereas indeed it should be introductory to another. It runs as follows: ²—

Quibus insertis, Honoratus et Urbanus, Episcopi legati provinciae Mauritaniae Sitiphensis, dixerunt:—'Jam dudum cum apud Sanctitatem vestram allegarem scripta dilati sumus cā contemplatione quod fratres nostri advenire possent de Numidiā legati: sed quia non pauci dies sunt quibus expectati minimè venerunt, ultrā prætermittere quæ nobis mandata sunt a nostris co-episcopis non oportet; atque ideo, fratres, suggestionem nostram libenter admittite. De fide enim Nicæni tractatus audivimus, verum et de sacrificiis inhibendis post prandium ut a jejunis sicut dig-

When these had been inserted, Honoratus and Urbanus, bishops legate of the province of Mauritania Sitiphensis, said: 'A while ago, when we produced letters before your Holiness, we were put off in the hope that our brethren the legates from Numidia might arrive: but since the days are not few that they have been expected but have not come, we must not further postpone the matters intrusted to us by our fellow-bishops: and therefore, brethren, do you willingly admit our proposal. For we have heard about the faith of the Nicene Council, and also

¹ *Dissertatio in Synodos Africanas*, § 6; *Opera*, tom. iii. p. 266.

² Bruns, *Canones*, i. p. 133; Justelli *Bibliotheca Juris Canonici Veteris*, Lutetiae, 1661, tom. i. p. 350.

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after prandium, that, as is right,
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The whole question here is to what does the adverb of
time *tunc* refer in this passage? The Greek Canonists¹ Balsa-
mon and Zonaras say that it refers to the Council of Nicæa,
adding that they can find no other reference to such a rule
having been entertained at the Great Council. But we
must remember that however commanding is the authority
of these two commentators when dealing with Greek canons
and Greek customs, it does not follow that they must be
right when treating of Latin canons. In this particular
instance they have been in a great measure misled by the
inaccuracy of the translator of the canons, who cut the
knot by putting his own sense on the passage. The Greek
text as given by Justell,² Beveridge,³ Hardouin,⁴ and Rhalle⁵
runs as follows :—

πρὶ τῆς πίστεως γὰρ τοῦ ἐν For we have heard of the
Νικαίᾳ τρακτάτου ἡκούσαμεν faith of the tractate in Nicæa :

¹ The Commentary of Balsamon is as follows: 'They said that the holy
things must not be offered by priests after they had tasted food, but fasting,
because they say this was also confirmed by the fathers at Nicæa in the
tractate of the faith, that is, in the definition of the faith (for *tractatus* in Latin
means *testing*), but in the canons of the first Synod in Nicæa nothing whatever
has been found about such a proposal.' Zonaras gives his opinion thus :
'They suggested, therefore, that the holy things ought not to be offered after
the ariston, that is, that the approach should not be made by priests who had
eaten, but fasting. They say also, we have heard in the tractate of the
Nicene Synod about the faith that it was then also confirmed. Now the word
tractatus is Roman, and in Greek means issue, determination. But in the
canons of the first Synod of Nicæa nothing whatever has been found about
such a proposal.' It is strange that they thought it might be found in the
Nicene Creed; perhaps it was that they could find it nowhere else.

² Justelli *Bibliotheca Juris*, tom. i. p. 351.

³ *Pandectæ Canonum*, tom. i. p. 573.

⁴ *Conciliorum Collectio regia maxima* studio P. Joannis Harduini, Parisiis,
1715, tom. i. col. 885.

⁵ *Σύνταγμα τῶν Θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων κ.τ.λ.* ὑπὸ Γ. Α. Ῥάλλη καὶ Μ. Πότλη.
Ἀθηνῶν, 1852, τόμος Γ. σελ. 416.

ἀληθές ἐστιν περὶ τῶν γινομένων
μετὰ τὸ ἄριστον ἀγίων, ἵνα ἀπὸ
νηστικῶν, ὡς ἐστιν ἄξιον, προσ-
φέρωνται, καὶ τότε ἐβεβαιώθη.

it is true about the holy things
happening after the ariston that
they should be offered (as is
right) by fasting men, and it was
then confirmed.

The translator, then, was clearly puzzled. First he was wise enough to leave the Latin word *tractatus* untranslated. He does not seem to have been familiar with the use of the word to mean a council of bishops.¹ Elsewhere in this same code he translates it *συζήτης*,² where probably it means a council: here however he is not quite certain about the meaning and therefore he transfers the word bodily into his Greek text. Balsamon and Zonaras explain it as meaning³ scope, drift, purpose, determination, or testing.

Next the translator⁴ reads 'verum est' in place of 'verum et'; which connects the second part of the passage with the first, as if the bishops had been desirous of finding out whether or no it was true that the Council of Nicæa had prohibited postprandial celebration; but there is no hint elsewhere of any such thing. Then he seems to have read 'de sacrificiis habendis' instead of *inhibendis*; while he omits the 'et nunc' altogether. The reason of this omission is evident, for with the interpretation he puts on the passage the words would make nonsense: he could not say 'We have heard that it is true that this was confirmed at the Council of Nicæa and now,' therefore he omits the words to suit his interpretation.

With this text before them the two Greek commentators

¹ Du Cange gives a string of authorities for this meaning. Vigilius of Tapsus, the African, uses *Tractatus plenus* in the same sense as *Concilium plenum*.

² Justelli *Bibliotheca*, tom. i. p. 333 and 347, where it is 'ad diem præstitutam nostri tractatus,' the day fixed for our council.

³ σκοπός, βόλευμα, δοκιμασία.

⁴ This is the text according to Dionysius Exiguus, but it is not accepted as the real reading. (Justelli *Bibliotheca*, i. 151.) Hardouin (l.c.) says upon verum et, 'Hoc est verum etiam.'

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could do no more than understand the bishops to be speak-
ing of the Council of Nicæa, and they could only say that
nowhere else was any such reference to be discovered.

But though the Latin be not clear and the Greek trans-
lation be inaccurate, yet a little care and thought will
probably shed much light on the passage and make it
clear.

In order to this we must take it in the connection in
which it is recorded in the *Codex Ecclesiæ Africanæ*, and not
in the so-called Third Council of Carthage. There is good
reason for so doing. It has been already said that the
collection which passes under the name of the Third Coun-
cil of Carthage bears evidence of being a confused farrago
of canons, selected from various councils and dressed up as
belonging to one; and this particular passage is manifestly
very much out of place. For the bishops ask the council
to listen to their proposal, and there is no proposal made by
them, but the council closes abruptly without listening to
them.¹ This is hardly likely. Then again, in the canons
of the Third Council of Carthage they have already ap-
peared several times with proposals which have been con-
sidered and discussed, but they have never been described
until now when they are called legates of Mauritania, and
their appeal to be heard is met with contemptuous silence,
and the council comes to an end. It reads like the counting
out of a tiresome member of the House of Commons. But
in the *Codex Ecclesiæ Africanæ* all this is remedied, and
becoming attention is paid to the two legates. The passage
introduces the two bishops as speaking for the first time,
therefore their description is given, and when they are
mentioned afterwards their title is omitted. This is reason-
able enough. Then in the address to these bishops they
ask the council to attend to their 'suggestionem,' and the
next canon in the *Codex* commences, 'Illud autem
sugerimus,' which is evidently taking up the *suggestio*

¹ See Bruns, *Canones*, i. p. 133.

they desire to make ; and the subsequent three or four canons are due to the proposals of Honoratus and Urbanus. This sequence is so intelligible, that if we would try to understand the meaning of the passage by its context, we must look for that context in the *Codex* rather than in the confused collection that goes under the name of the Third Council of Carthage.

In the *Codex*, then, we find that in A.D. 419 the canons of various Synods which had been held under the presidency of Aurelius, Bishop of Carthage, were read, discussed, and in most cases re-enacted. Amongst others the canons of Hippo Regius were read over. Canon xxxiv. of the *Codex* informs us that, at the instance of Bishop Epigonius, it was agreed that no alteration should be made in the Canons of Hippo, except in the matter of making known the time of Easter. Thereupon follow some twelve or thirteen canons taken from the Council of Hippo, and then there occurs a pause, marked by the passage in question, *Quibus insertis*. It is as if the clerk of the council had written, 'At this juncture, when these canons had been entered in the Acts of the Council, the two bishops, Honoratus and Urbanus, rose and addressed the president.'

Now, if we turn back to the acts of the council inserted between Canons xxxiii. and xxxiv., we shall see that the president, Aurelius, had said something about these bishops. He said that a letter had been previously read before the council by Honoratus and Urbanus ; but that he had also received a letter from Crescentianus, Primate of Numidia, saying that he was either coming himself or that he would send, as usual, some legates to the council. These, however, had not arrived ; and as Honoratus and Urbanus had come a long way and said that they really could not stop any longer, he thought it well to proceed to business, which had best be done by reading (as had been desired) the *Breviarium* of the Council of Hippo, which was then proceeded with at once.

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At the end of this 'Breviarium,' Honoratus and Urbanus rise with the letter of questions to be submitted to the council, which had already been read before his Holiness the president. But they preface the suggestions they have to make by saying that two of the matters they had in charge had already been dealt with—viz. 'De fide Nicæni tractatus,' and 'De sacrificiis inhibendis post prandium:'¹ therefore they will at once go on to their next proposal. Of the second they say that post-prandial celebrations had been prohibited 'et tunc et nunc.'

Now, taking for granted that we have the exact words of the bishops—and Africans were rather abrupt in their Latin at times—to what can these adverbs of time possibly refer? Of the *nunc* there can be no question; the Canon of Hippo inhibiting celebrating 'post prandium' had just been read and re-enacted by the vote of the council. But to what does the *tunc* refer? There can be no serious question about this when the context is examined. The whole attention of the council had been directed to the Council of Hippo. The president Aurelius had drawn attention to the summary of canons of this council appended to the letter of the Primate Mizonius, and desired it to be read. The bishop Epigonius had specially moved and carried that this *Breviarium* or summary should be accepted and incorporated with the canons of their present council. The summary commenced with the recitation of the Nicene Creed, and it contained the prohibition of celebrations *post prandium*. When Honoratus and Urbanus spoke, the one thing most prominently before the council was the reading of this *Breviarium*. They say that in it two of their instructions had been met—the one about the Nicene Creed, and the other about Fasting Communion, 'et tunc et nunc confirmatum.' What can this refer to but

¹ If this had already been an universal custom, what occasion would there have been for the Mauritanian bishops to have asked to have the question decided by this Council?

the Council of Hippo held some twenty-five years before? I am bold to say that it is absolutely impossible that it can refer to anything else. With this meaning all becomes clear, the sense is good, the difficulty which fairly overcame John Johnson vanishes, and the bubble about a lost canon of Nicæa bursts and all is simple and straightforward.¹

There is, then, not the slightest ground for supposing even for a moment that the first general Council of Nicæa ever passed such a canon as some have supposed in favour of fasting celebration or Communion.

Nay we may say more. Fleury² tells us that the anxiety of the fathers of the council was very great to preserve every ancient tradition or custom. If therefore they did not—and it is manifest that they did not—speak of Fasting Communion, it was because it was not a tradition in their time.

This shows, even if there were no other proof, that the custom is destitute of Apostolical authority, but was introduced (wisely and well without question) at the Council of Hippo.

SECTION 8. *Maundy Thursday.*

It is scarcely possible that the anniversary 'Cœna Domini' would have been instituted if there had been any Apostolical ordinance against taking food between the stroke of midnight and the act of Communion. This anniversary was not (as some have asserted) confined to one small region, but we hear of it in Africa, Phrygia, Antioch,

¹ 'Verisimile est Episcopos illos in mandatis habuisse agendi de fide Nicenâ, et de Sacrificiis a non jejunis minimè celebrandis. Quin et verisimile apparet quod per ea quæ ex Concilio Hipponensi prælegi et de novo hic confirmari audierant, circa hæc puncta ipsis satisfactum fuerit: unde ad alia quæ suggerenda habebant, pergunt.'—Van Espen, Scholion in can. xlvii. *Codicis Africane, Opera*, tom. iii. p. 310.

² 'On voit combien les pères étoient soigneux de conserver jusques aux moindres traditions, quand elles étoient anciennes.'—*Hist. Eccl.* lib. xi. cap. xxii. tom. iii. Paris, 1704. p. 156.

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meux de conserver jusques aux nes.'—*Hist. Eccl.* lib. xi. cap.

Constantinople, Spain, and Gaul.¹ This gives a wide area for the custom which was in vogue early in the fourth century. Now, if the Apostles had laid down a strict rule that the Blessed Sacrament should never be received after food taken since midnight, it is hardly to be supposed that we should find this annual deviation from their rule in such early times. St. Augustine says, that if the Lord or His Apostles had made it a rule that the Communion should always be after food, none would have ventured to have varied the custom. Similarly we may say, that if the Apostles had made it a rule and had taught everywhere the necessity of Fasting Communion, none would have ventured, in such early days at all events, to have departed from their ordinance. For, as St. Jerome says, each province in his time asserted that the practices then in vogue amongst themselves were derived by tradition from the Apostles.

The anniversary 'Cœna Domini' was a feast on the Thursday before Easter in commemoration of the mystical Supper at which or after which the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood was instituted. The Supper was itself regarded as mysterious,² and St. Chrysostom and Greek writers call it τὸ μυστικὸν δαῖπνον. It was not the Jewish Paschal Supper—on that point the ancients were agreed ; but at the same time the whole action of our dear Lord before and at the Supper shed a deep mystery around it. Therefore, as the feet-washing at the Supper was ever regarded as having some mysterious reference to Baptism,³

¹ St. Augustine says it was widely prevalent in his day. He says that it was one of those questions which varied 'per loca regionesque,' Ep. liv. *Ad Januarium*.

² St. Isidore of Seville calls it *Sacramentum*, and says that in part memory of it the Church office of Vespers was originated.—*De Officiis Eccl.* lib. i. cap. xx. *Opera*, Coloniae Agrippinae, 1617, p. 395 H.

³ St. Augustine says that it was not practised everywhere lest it should seem to detract from the reverence due to Baptism. (*Ad Januarium*, Ep. lv. cap. xviii. § 33 ; *Opera*, Parisiis, 1688, tom ii. col. 141 F.) The tractate appended to St. Cyprian's works (Parisiis, 1626, col. cxxi. App.) carefully distinguishes between the two, and likens the feet-washing to daily absolution:

so this mystical Supper was regarded as having some bearing upon the Sacrament of the Eucharist. In memory of this therefore, when the taking the Sacrament at a meal generally was given up, there was still preserved the annual 'Cœna Domini,' or Lord's Supper, on the Thursday before Easter. This feast was always followed by celebration and Communion. On this day at least there was therefore certainly no fasting from midnight as a physical preparation for Communion.

This feast was so popular, and had so great a hold on the mind of the people, that the Thursday next before Easter has in the West received its name from the feast, and not, as we should rather expect, from the Blessed Sacrament then instituted. In Western Liturgies it ever bears the name 'Feria quinta in Cœna Domini,' or Lord's Supper Thursday. The Cœna Domini is not what is now understood in England as the Lord's Supper: it is not the Sacrament of the Eucharist, but this annual commemorative feast.¹ It is the annual meal after which the Eucharist is celebrated and received. In the East this name has not

¹ Supra diximus semel lotos baptisate eodem lavacro ulterius non egere; sed hoc lavacrum quotidianis est excessibus institutum et jugis retractatio usque ad novissima veniens, &c.—*De Ablutione Pedum*.

² The phrase Cœna Domini (or κυριακὸν δεῖπνον) is almost unknown as a name of the Blessed Sacrament. Twice, indeed, St. Augustine uses it in this sense, but he specially explains what he means, because he was using the words in an unusual sense. He says that St. Paul calls the Eucharist the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor. xi. 20; but St. Chrysostom explains the passage of the agapè. St. Augustine, however, uses the phrase elsewhere of the Sacrament, as in his *Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount*, lib. ii. cap. vii. § 26: 'De Sacramento autem Corporis Domini ut illi non moveant quæstionem qui plurimi in Orientalibus partibus non quotidie Cœna Dominicæ communicant, cum iste panis quotidianus dictus sit.' (*Opera*, Parisiis, 1689, tom. iii. part ii. col. 210.) St. Basil also uses the phrase, *ὅτι ὡς καὶ δειπνῶμεθα μῆτε τὸ κοινὸν δεῖπνον ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ ἰσθλεῖν καὶ πίνειν μῆτε τὸ κυριακὸν δεῖπνον ἐν οἰκίᾳ καθυβρίσειν*. *Regule brevius tractatæ*, Interrog. cccx. *Opera* ed. Gaume, tom. ii. p. 752 (Bened. p. 525 E). St. Isidore of Seville (A.D. 600) seems to think that the phrase 'communicating' comes from the idea of *Cœna*: 'Cœna vocatur a communione vescentium, κοινὸν quippe Græci commune dicunt. Unde et communicantes quod communiter, i.e. pariter convenient.'—*Origines*, lib. xx. cap. ii., *Opera*, 1617, p. 172 H.

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been attached to the day: but although they speak of the κυριακὸν δεῖπνον, the commemorative Lord's Supper, yet the day itself has no other name than 'the great and holy Thursday.'

In England in all probability the present popular name is derived from the feast. The day is called Maundy Thursday.¹ It is true that the word Maundy is generally derived from Mandatum, as if it were Mandate Thursday. Indeed, some spell the word *Maunday* to bring it nearer the etymology they favour. In further support of their derivation, the name *dies Mandati* is supposed to have applied to the day.² But if it be a name of the day it is very uncommon, so uncommon that all trace of such a name has disappeared. True, L'Estrange, who favours this etymology, seems to quote Balsamon for the use of the name; but, as all the world knows, Balsamon wrote in Greek, and no translation of his Commentary in Latin uses the name 'dies Mandati' for Maundy Thursday. The word *Mandatum* is liturgically applied to the feet-washing; but the feet-washing does not seem to have been so universally popular as the festal character of the day arising from the anniversary feast. St. Augustine tells us that in his day

¹ It was also called 'Shere Thursday,' which Neale (*Essays on Liturgiology*, 1863, p. 520) derives from *skier*, with the sense of pain or affliction. The MS. quoted below says it was so called because men used to shear their hair and beards on that day in preparation for Easter. Baillie, in his infamous *Ladensium Autocatcrisis* (1641, p. 78), calls it 'Shrif Thursday,' from the absolution then given to the Lenten penitents.

² Minshew (1626) says it is 'quasi dies mandati;' though he is not quite averse to the derivation from 'maund,' which he thinks may come from the Latin *mandere*, to eat. Later writers omit the *quasi* and speak of *dies mandati* as a name for the day. So Sparrow, Hamon L'Estrange, Wheatly, Nicholls, Procter, Blunt, and even the Prayer Book Interleaved. None but L'Estrange venture on any authority for the name. Hampson (*Medii Ævi Kalendarium*, London, 1841) boldly says that the name 'Dies Mandati' was known where the Saxon *mands* were never heard of: he adduces no proof. Wheatly spells it *Maunday*, so do Sparrow and Nicholls. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for July 1779, p. 354, it is said, 'Maundy Thursday is the poor people's Thursday, from the French *maundier*, to beg. The King's liberality to the poor on that Thursday in Lent, a season when they are supposed to have lived very low. *Maundiant* is at this day in French, a beggar.'

the feet-washing was not practised in many parts because it was thought to interfere with the doctrine about Baptism. Indeed, as time advanced, the practice seems to have been confined to monasteries and cathedrals. In monasteries it was practised at other times besides Maundy Thursday, though this was the great anniversary of the institution of the practice. There is not much reason, then, to suppose that the name Maundy is derived from the feet-washing on the day. The name *dies Mandati* is unknown as a date, or a name of the day, and the mandatum or lavipedium does not seem to have been universally popular.

The common liturgical name of the day in England, as in the West, was 'Feria quinta in Cœna Domini;' so that, in default of a better and more certain derivation, we should rather look for some interpretation of this common name of the day than the adaptation of an unused phrase. There is a French word *mandè*, which seems to have been used for a feast, and then for the feast for the poor; and there is an English word *maundy*, which means a feast or meal given to the poor. This really seems the best derivation for the name, whether these words have any connection or not with the French *mande* and the English *maund*, both of which mean 'basket.'

This is the derivation of the name given in a manuscript book of Homilies in the British Museum,¹ which dates from about the middle of the fifteenth century. The homily for the day begins thus: 'This day is called Schir-thursday or ellis ze day of Cristes Maundy, zat is Maundy thursday. For zat day sowpid Criste wt his disciples befor his passion.' It is clear from this that in the mind of the author of the Homily 'Cristes Maundy'

¹ MS. Harleian, 2247, fol. 85 v. A passage much to the same purpose is quoted from Sir Thomas More's *Works*, p. 1038: 'In hys seconde parte, which I call hys seconde course, he treateth the maundy of Christ with Hys Apostles upon the Sheare Thursday, wherein our Saviour actually dyd institute the Blessed Sacrament.'

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is the Supper of Christ, the direct representative of the liturgical name of the day 'Cœna Domini.' He does not stop to say that *maundy* means a meal, or feast, or supper, because it was a word in common use, as it was a century later.¹ The more probable meaning of Maundy Thursday is Feast Thursday, the English phrase representing the Latin Cœna Domini. The name still remains in Latin and English, though the reason of it has passed away.²

It may be that it was the determination to relax the severity of the fast on that Thursday, under whatever plea, which made the maundy so popular. At all events, there is evidence of a constant attempt to render the fast on this day less strict than on the other days of Holy Week, and the attempt seems to have been successful.

The first³ notice that we have of the Maundy or anniversary Lord's Supper is at the Council of Laodicea in the fourth century. The fiftieth Canon of the Council is as follows:—

¹ Thus Hutchinson (A.D. 1552) translates St. Augustine's words, 'Eum adhibuit ad convivium in quo corporis et sanguinis sui figuram discipulis commendavit et tradidit.' 'He admitted Judas unto the Maundy wherein He delivered to His disciples the figure of His Body and Blood.' (*Works*, Parker Society, p. 259.) Elsewhere he argues against those who thought it necessary to have a feast before Communion. 'Moreover, in that the text saith that while they were eating Jesus took bread, and ordained His Last Supper, some do reason hereof that the Sacrament is not to be received fasting, as the custom now is, but after other meats and drinks, after a certain refection, banquet or maundy, which they say those that be rich should make to refresh the poor and needy. For the defence of this maundy they allege not only Christ's example, but also where it is written that the Corinthians indeed kept such a maundy. But Paul reprehendeth them therefor' &c. p. 221.

² The threefold Episcopal Benediction as used at Salisbury on this day is as follows: 'Benedicat vos Deus qui per unigeniti sui passionem vetus pascha in novum voluit converti, concedatque vobis ut expurgato veteris fermenti contagio nova in vobis perseveret conspersio. Amen. Et qui ad celebrandam Redemptoris nostri Cœnam mente devotâ convenistis eternam dapium vobiscum epulas reportetis. Amen. Ipsius quoque opitulante clementiâ mundemini a sordibus peccatorum qui ad insinuandum humilitatis exemplum pedes lavare voluit discipulorum. Amen.'—*MS. Benedictionale*, Salisbury Cathedral Library. Here the cœna comes before the feet-washing.

³ We must remember that St. John Cassian (*Instit.* iii. 3 Atrebat, 1628, p. 45) implies that the Church office of Vespers was in memory of the Cœna Dominica, the Mystical Supper at which the institution of the Blessed Sacrament took place. So also St. Isidore of Seville, *De Officiis Ecclesiasticis*, lib. i. cap. xx.

It is not lawful in Lent in the last week to break the fast on Thursday, and dishonour the whole Lent ; but men must fast the whole of Lent on dry diet.¹

Now the Lenten fast might be broken in two ways, either by taking the *ariston* or *prandium*, that is, the chief meal of the forenoon, or by eating more nourishing or more delicate food than Lent allowed. Probably both of these are here referred to. Joannes Phurnes, as has been seen,² distinctly asserts that at this time it was the general custom to take the chief meal of the forenoon before the Eucharist was celebrated. This would account for the canon immediately preceding this in the Code of Laodicea, that the Sacrament of the Eucharist was not to be offered in Lent except on Saturdays and Sundays, which were in the East always regarded as festivals, even during Lent. The logical sequence of the two canons would then be made manifest. Canon xlix. forbids the offering of the Eucharist during Lent except on the weekly festivals of Saturday and Sunday. If at that time the *ariston* were taken before the oblation, the *ariston* would break the Lenten fast, therefore the oblation with the preceding *ariston* could only be on festivals. Canon l. extends the prohibition even to Maundy Thursday, because of the breach of the Lenten fast implied by the Maundy. That this canon does refer to the taking the *ariston*³ before the Communion is seen by the words of

¹ *Canones Apostolorum et Conciliorum*, sæc. iv. v. vi. vii. ed. Bruns, Berolini, 1839, i. p. 78. The canon was re-enacted under St. Martin in A.D. 572 (Co. Braga II. can. l.; Bruns, ii. p. 53), and again in A.D. 692 at the Trullan Council, can. xxix.; Bruns, i. p. 46.

² See above, p. 46.

³ St. Augustine in the well-known Epistle to Januarius (Ep. liv.) traces the breach of the Lenten fast on Maundy Thursday in his day by taking the *prandium*, to a custom of bathing on that day, 'because men could not bear the fast and the bath simultaneously.' He then goes on to trace the habit of bathing on that day, not, as we should expect, to the *lavipedium*, probably because it was not familiar to him, but to the Anniversary Maundy preparatory to Communion. This of itself conveyed a festal character to the day, which was therefore chosen for the bath preparatory to the Easter Eve Baptism.

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the canon being cited by two subsequent councils, and applied distinctly and directly to the Maundy. In the sixth century the selection of ancient canons made at the Second Council of Braga¹ adopts the words of the Council of Laodicea; and we know from the tenth canon of this second Council of Braga,² and from the sixteenth of the first Council of Braga,³ that the reason of the revival of the canon was that the Priscillianist heretics had abused the Maundy. Again, just at the end of the seventh century, the words of the Laodicean Canon are used at Constantinople,⁴ and this in direct reference to the Maundy or Cœna Domini, which had been sanctioned by African canons.

The Council of Laodicea, then, in the middle of the fourth century forbade the Maundy, not because of any supposed irreverence to the Blessed Sacrament, but because of the dishonour to the Lenten fast. It is clear, then, that in the mind of the bishops there assembled the partaking of food between midnight and Communion was not regarded as an irreverence.

The next notice which we have of the Maundy comes from Africa at the end of the same century. The fathers at Hippo and Carthage felt that the importance of the Maundy was so great that the fast of Lent could not supersede it.⁵ In consequence of irreverence they felt bound to pass a canon, that for the future the general rule was to be that men should celebrate the Communion fasting; but from this general rule they make the special exception of Maundy Thursday. This canon was adopted and re-enforced by several African councils.

It, however, seems to have puzzled some, for St. Augus-

¹ Co. Bracar. II. can. I.; Bruns, ii. p. 53.

² Bruns, ii. p. 42.

³ Co. Bracar. I. can. xvi.; Bruns, ii. p. 32.

⁴ Co. Quinsextum, can. xxix.; Bruns, i. p. 46.

⁵ *Breviarium Hipponense*, can. xxviii.; Bruns, i. p. 138; Co. Carthag. III. can. xxix.; Bruns, i. p. 127. See these discussed above, p. 50 sq.

tine has to explain what is best to be done about the Lenten fast on this day. The *Cæna Domini* he takes for granted; but he recommends that it be so managed, that the usual Lenten refectio at three o'clock in the afternoon should form the Maundy before the Communion. Thus the Lenten fast would be intact, there would be no *prandium* to break the fast, and the canon ordering the Maundy would be satisfied. But he says that '*we*' (i.e. probably the bishops in the council who passed the canon) 'dare forbid none, though *we* compel none, to take the prandium,' or forenoon meal the taking of which implied the relaxation of the Lenten fast. From this it is clear that neither the African fathers nor St. Augustine in particular thought that reception after food taken since midnight was in itself a dishonour to the Blessed Sacrament. It is evident that St. Augustine thought more of the Lenten fast.

There is one circumstance which must here be noted in passing. The canon which excepts the Maundy Thursday Communion from the law of fasting especially ordains that the mortuary celebrations are not to be excepted from that rule; which would imply that at that time there was a contrary use in this regard, and taken in conjunction with St. Augustine's letter, which led to the passing of the canon, gives us to understand that the liberty in this respect had been abused.

But while St. Augustine and the African fathers were recognizing the *Cæna Domini* by a canon, St. Chrysostom¹ was speaking of it as having been a means of irreverence which tended to the institution of the Lenten fast. He says that men used to approach the Holy Mysteries with very little heed, especially on the day when the institution of the Sacrament took place, and that on this account the Lenten fast was introduced to ensure some preparation at

¹ 'Many of old came carelessly and anyhow to the mysteries, and especially at this time when Christ instituted them.'—*Contra Judeos*, iii. Parisii, tom. i. p. 611 c.

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all events. Now, whether this account of the origin of Lent is likely or not is not to our purpose here, but what is to the purpose is the reference to a somewhat hurried reception on Maundy Thursday. For the feast on that day before Communion must have been known to St. Chrysostom and his audience; otherwise the reference would not have been made by the former or understood by the latter. At Antioch, then, towards the end of the fourth century, the Maundy was not unknown, though the practice had been discontinued.

About this time we learn that the Egyptians never communicated except after food. This probably is the last instance of the prevalence of a custom which had been at the first universal. It is recorded as an historic fact and without blame.¹

The next notice we have of the Maundy is about two centuries later, and comes from Spain. Here we find it condemned in more than one council,² not on its own account, but because it had been misused by the Priscillianist heretics. This heresy, as is well known, distracted the Spanish Church for several centuries, which accounts for the sternness of the denunciations of later councils: the long continuance of the struggle and the pernicious character of the heresy revealed the necessity of increasing severity. The various views of these heretics are not very accurately known, but they seem to have combined the errors of the Manichees with the visions of the Gnostics. They denied the verity of the Incarnation, and consequently the resurrection of the body. It was no doubt in consequence of these errors that they held low and faulty views of the

¹ It must be remembered that this is no expression of opinion on my part, as some seemed to think when the same was said in the first edition. Socrates mentions it without blame, as he does many other habits and practices which would shock us now. He records without blame that in Thessaly 'all of them but a very few die unbaptized.'—*Ecc. Hist.* lib. v. cap. xxii.

² Co. Bracarense I. [A.D. 563], can. xvi.; Bruns, ii. p. 32; Co. Bracar. II. [A.D. 572], can. x. and can. l.; Bruns, ii. pp. 42, 53.

Sacraments. At one time they were in the habit of receiving the Communion without consuming it, while later on they seem to have made much of the Maundy and the wake for the dead, to the degradation and depreciation of the Blessed Sacrament. The former error was probably due to their Manichean proclivities. The Manichean heretics, the *teotallers* of their day, anticipated the Poman Catholics in their refusal of the Chalice. Pope Leo the Great¹ calls on his hearers to be on their watch against those who declined the Cup in the Communion, as this was the symptom of pernicious heresy. In imitation of the Manichees, the Priscillianists seem to have offered themselves for Communion along with the others, but for some reason they seem to have reserved both species. This may have been to hide their rejection of the Chalice. The Manichees had declined the Chalice in Church: this led to their detection. The Priscillianists reserved both species (as it would seem) in order to hide their uncatholic custom under a prevalent practice.² The Council of Saragossa therefore condemned the practice of not consuming in Church under a perpetual anathema:³ 'If any

¹ 'Cumque ad tegendam infidelitatem suam nostris audeant interesse mysteriis, ita in Sacramentorum Communionem se temperant ut interdum, ne penitus latere non possint, ore indigno Christi Corpus accipiant, Sanguinem autem redemptionis nostre haurire omnino declinent.'—Serm. xli. In Quadrag. iv.; *Opera*, Parisiis, 1675, tom. i. p. 217.

² That both species were reserved may be seen from two passages. St. Gregory Nazienzen tells us that both species reserved by his sister were the means of her miraculous recovery from illness: *εἰ που τι τῶν ἀντιτύπων τοῦ τιμίου αἵματος ἢ τοῦ αἵματος ἡ χεὶρ ἐθεράπευσεν*. (Orat. xi. Funebris Oratio in laudem sororis; *Opera*, Parisiis, 1609, tom. i. p. 187 A.) The other passage is from the life of St. Basil, falsely ascribed to his friend St. Amphilochius. A Jew had intruded himself to see the first celebration of St. Basil, and was converted by seeing a miracle. He then took home some of either species to show his wife. 'Cum vero de utrisque servasset reliquias domum abiens uxori ostendit.' (*Acta Sanctorum*, Junii, tom. ii. pp. 943-4.) Probably the same is seen in what St. Jerome says of Exuperius, Bishop of Tolosa: 'Qui Corpus Domini canistro vimineo, Sanguinem portat in vitro.'—Ep. ad Rusticum, cxv. (al. 4); *Opera*, Veronæ, 1734, tom. i. col. 941 E.

³ Co. Cæsaraug. I. [A.D. 381], can. iii.; Bruns, ii. p. 13; cf. Co. Toletan. I. [A.D. 400], can. xiv.; Bruns, i. p. 205. Pope Stephen III. (A.D. 755), writing

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one is proved to have received the grace of the Eucharist in Church and not to have consumed it, let him be anathema for ever.'

Now there was nothing inherently wrong in taking home the Communion. Fathers of the Church had recognized and commended the custom. Tertullian speaks ¹ of it as well known in his day; St. Ambrose ² refers to the custom in speaking of a shipwreck; St. Basil ³ commends the practice amongst monks, whether hermits or secular; St. Jerome ⁴ is not without reference to the habit; St. Gregory Nazienzen ⁵ speaks of his saintly sister as treasuring up the Sacrament. But when the custom became perverted by heretics, and it became the means of concealing erroneous tenets, then the Church affected by the heresy forbade the custom within the limits of its authority.

Not otherwise was it with the Maundy. The anniversary feast before Communion had been ordained by councils and recognized by St. Augustine at least, but when it was abused by heretics to favour their own low views of the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood, then it was condemned under severe penalties in the Church infected by the heresy. The first and second Councils of Braga condemn the Maundy, and the practice of offering the

to Pepin to enlist his aid against the Lombards, says that the Lombards reserved in unholy vessels the Sacrament to consume at home after food. This habit of the Priscillianists may have arisen from some such motive. Pope Stephen writes thus: 'Munera sacra, id est, Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi in suis contaminatis vasis, quos folles vocant, miserunt: et cibo carnum copioso saturati comedebant eadem munera.'—*Baronii Annales*, Lucæ, 1742, tom. xii. p. 613.

¹ *Ad Uxorem*, lib. ii. cap. v.; *Opera*, Parisiis, 1675, p. 169 B.

² *De Eccessu Fratris sui Satyri*, lib. i. §§ 43 and 45. One not yet fully initiated into the Christian mysteries, in fear of death by shipwreck, asked for the Sacrament from those who were initiated, and fastening it round his neck in a napkin committed himself to the sea.

³ *Ep. ad Casaream Patriciani*, xciii. (al. 289); *Opera*, ed. Gaume, tom. iii. p. 267.

⁴ *Ep. xlviii.* (al. 50), § 15; *Opera*, Veronæ, 1734, tom. i. col. 225. He blames a man for receiving at home when he did not consider himself fit to come to church. 'An alius in publico alius in domo Christus est?'

Orat. xi.; *Opera*, Parisiis, 1609, tom. i. p. 187 A.

mortuary oblation after food, because of the 'most execrable poison of the Priscillianist Sect,' and because some priests were 'corrupted with the foulness of the old Priscillianist heresy.'

Here again we have the same connection between the mortuary celebrations and the Maundy that has been observed before. This connection at first sight seems difficult to explain. But what was it that made the Priscillianists go astray in this matter of the mortuary celebration? At first it might be supposed that it might be some result of their denial of the resurrection. But this cannot be the case, for it is not the wake or feast for the dead that is condemned, but the celebration of the Sacrament after food. Had it been the wake for the dead that was condemned, it might have been ascribed to their disbelief in the Incarnation and resurrection of the body. For they fasted on Christmas Day and on Sunday to show their disbelief in the doctrines then commemorated; and these customs were therefore condemned by Spanish councils.¹ If, then, they had used the feast for the dead as an argument against the resurrection, or as an argument that the flesh was evil, and had thus upheld their Manichean tenets, then we should expect to find the feast condemned. But it is not the feast for the dead that is condemned: it is the celebration of the Mass for the dead after taking wine, or celebrating Mass for the dead after the Maundy on Maundy Thursday. It must be then concluded that the reason of the connection between the Maundy and the mortuary celebration, and the condemnation of the two together in these Spanish councils, was that both were commonly celebrated after food, and that the Priscillianists argued hence for the importance of the feast and the comparative unimportance of the Communion.

There has before been shown reason for thinking that the

¹ Co. Cæsaraug. I. can. ii.; Bruns, ii. p. 13; Co. Bracar. I. iv.; Bruns, ii. p. 31; Co. Bracar. II. lvii.; Bruns, ii. p. 54.

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original condemnation of Communion after food in the African councils was due in a great measure to the excesses in the wakes for the dead which had been condemned so strongly by St. Augustine. This is confirmed by the special mention of the mortuary celebration in the African canon. There is therefore good reason for thinking that there was prevalent in Spain a habit of holding the mortuary or commendatory Mass after a meal or feast in honour, or for the consolation, of the dead. The Priscillianists seized hold of this in favour of their false and low views of the Sacrament of the Altar, degrading the Sacrament into an appendix or corollary of the feast, claiming also Maundy Thursday in favour of their error. The Church of Spain therefore, in abhorrence of such views, condemned both the Maundy and also the celebration for the dead after food, making Fasting Communion compulsory at all times without exception.

But though the Maundy had been condemned in Spain because of the Priscillianists, yet that would be no reason why it should not be maintained elsewhere.¹ It is therefore well worthy of note, that thirteen years after its condemnation in Spain, the Maundy was recognized without comment in the South of France. In A.D. 585 the second Council of Mâcon² accepts and incorporates so much of the African canon as recognizes the Maundy as an exception to the general rule that priests must be fasting when they offered the oblation. If the council had not intended to recognize the Maundy, there was no need to have quoted more than the first words of the African canon. It is not as if they quoted the whole of the canon, but they

¹ It is very remarkable that St. Isidore of Seville (cir. A.D. 600) alludes to the Maundy as being observed in his day, though it had been condemned at some Spanish councils: 'Coena Dominica dicta est eo quod in illo die Salvator pascha cum discipulis suis fecerit: quod et usque hodie sicut est traditum celebratur.'—*Origines*, lib. vi. cap. xviii.; *Opera*, Coloniae Agrippinae, 1617, p. 50 H.

² Co. Matiscon II. [A.D. 585], can. vi.; Bruns, ii. p. 251.

quote only half of it, and this includes the Maundy, and excludes the condemnation of the commendatory celebration after food. It is also to be remarked that the canon does not itself condemn celebration after food, so much as after food taken to excess. 'No priest stuffed with food, or drunken with wine,' *confertus cibo aut crapulatus vino*, is strong and to our ears coarse language. It may well be, therefore, that they were content to acknowledge and maintain the Maundy, so long as excess was not tolerated for a moment. Had the council desired to discourage or condemn the Maundy, there would have been a special clause to that effect, as there was a century later at Constantinople when the same African canon was recited. It may safely be argued that, as the fathers at Mâcon incorporated the African canon with its recognition of the *Cena Domini*,¹ they too regarded the anniversary commemoration as advantageous and edifying, so long as all approach to excess was avoided.²

The last time we hear of the Maundy in its original position³ is at the council held at Constantinople at the end of the seventh century in the dome chamber of the Imperial Palace, hence called in Trullo.⁴ The fathers

¹ Thus Cardinal Bona says of this second Council of Mâcon: 'Confirmat citatum canonem Concilii Carthaginensis cum exceptione diei Coenae Domini' (*Rerum Litur.* lib. i. cap. xxi. § 2, ed. Sala, tom. ii. p. 110), 'It confirms the Canon of Carthage together with its exception of Maundy Thursday.' So, too, Bingham, speaking of the later canons on Fasting Communion, writes: 'Some of which allow the African custom of communicating after eating on the Thursday in Passion Week; but others, on account of the Priscillianists, forbid it.'—*Antiquities*, xv. vii. § 8.

² They would thus seem to agree with the Trullan fathers, who did not condemn *reception after food*, but only the breach of the strictness of the Lenten fast.

³ There is a very striking ceremony mentioned by Martene (*De Monachorum Ritibus*, lib. iii. cap. xlii. § 49) as obtaining at several monasteries, six of which he mentions by name. After Mass on Maundy Thursday the brothers go in procession to the Refectory, and there find *Hosts* (presumably unconsecrated) placed over the bread they are to eat. This is probably a reminiscence on the anniversary of the institution of the primitive custom of consecrating each meal with a portion of the reserved Sacrament.

⁴ Concilium in Trullo sive Quinisextum [A.D. 692], can. xxix.; Bruns, i. p. 46.

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there assembled speak with great respect of the African canon, which had been passed three hundred years before, and they praise its policy; but, at the same time, they give preference to the earlier canon of Laodicea, and discontinue the Maundy¹ so far as it interfered with Lenten strictness. But this is not done, as it was in Spain, because of any irreverence to the Sacrament accruing thence, but wholly and entirely on account of the Lenten fast. The very words of the Council of Laodicea are used, though without acknowledgment, and the same reason given, that the breach of the fast by the Maundy dishonours the whole Lent: there is no word of greater reverence for the Sacrament. The bishops in the canon say that, in obedience to the tradition of Apostles and Fathers, they prohibit the Maundy. But what, according to them, is the tradition? Is it that it is unlawful to communicate after a meal? No, it does not seem so. Is it that none may taste food between the stroke of midnight and the act of communion? No, the council says not so. But the tradition is that it is unlawful to take the *prandium* or *ariston* on Maundy Thursday because of the constraining rule of Lent.² This shows us that the Council of Laodicea was condemning the Maundy when it spoke of the breach of Lent on that

¹ The Lenten fast was broken in two ways on Maundy Thursday—by taking the *prandium* before the Anniversary Cœna Domini (see St. Augustine, Ep. liv. *Ad Januarianum*), and by taking more delicate food at the Cœna itself. The breach of Lent was condemned and discontinued; but it is remarkable that the Trullan canon does not condemn reception on this day after food, but it condemns the breach of Lent. In the sixteenth anathema of the first Council of Braga, held in A.D. 563, it is seen that the Maundy feast was held by some at 9 A.M., which would of itself dishonour the Lenten fast.—Bruns, ii. p. 32. See above, p. 69.

² Zonaras points out that when the fathers say they are following the traditions of Apostles and Fathers, they allude to the Apostolical Canon (can. lxviii. Bruns, i. p. 10), which deposes a bishop, priest, or deacon, and excommunicates a layman, who does not fast during Lent; and to the Canon of Laodicea (can. l. Bruns, i. p. 78), which prohibits the breach of the fast on Maundy Thursday: *Ἐνταῦθα τῶν Θεῶν κανόνων κ. τ. λ. ἐπὶ Γ. Α. Ἐδὲ καὶ Μ. Πέρλη: Ἀθήναι, 1852, τομ. Β. σελ. 367*. Both of these canons have respect to the Lenten fast, and not to the fast before Communion.

Thursday; it also helps us to see that the previous fast was ecclesiastical, and not what is now called the 'natural' fast that is spoken of in connection with Communion.

This council in *Trullo* has more pretensions to authority than the Spanish councils, and it condemns the Maundy because of the Lenten fast, since this was the chief point in which it affected them. The Council of Braga condemned the Maundy not because of Lent, but because of the Priscillianist heresy. They, therefore, condemned the reception after food as practised on Maundy Thursday, and not the breach of the Lenten fast, which affected them much more closely.

But men were more ready to forego Communion than they were to forego the relaxation of the severity of Lent. As the fast before Communion became more rigidly insisted on, the old rule of communicating upon Maundy Thursday became unobserved,¹ but, at the same time, the old rule that the severity of the Lenten fast was to be maintained on that day was also unobserved. After the Council in *Trullo* there sprang up an idea, which became a reason on Scriptural grounds, that it was fitting that there should be two meals on Maundy Thursday. Long before this St. Augustine had to argue on the point whether or no it was well to take the *prandium*, or morning meal, before the anniversary *Cena*; and his determination was that it was allowable, but unadvisable. But now men found out another argument for the relaxation of the fast. They said that the Lord rose up to wash the disciples' feet *during supper*; hence there was a pause of more or less duration between the two parts of the meal. This practically made two meals. Therefore, notwithstanding the Lenten fast, it was clearly right and proper to have two

¹ The Greeks now communicate upon Maundy Thursday, but do not communicate on Easter Day. Gratian (*De Consecrat.* Dist. ii. cap. xvii.) and St. Thomas (*Summa*. III. lxxx. 10) refer the rule of communicating on Maundy Thursday to Pope Soter, but erroneously. See Berardi, ii. p. 85.

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meals on that day, or at least to have one meal divided into two parts. This continuation of one meal in two parts divided by an interval of time was spoken of as 'continuatio jejunii'; for the division of one meal broke not the Lenten fast, which only allowed one meal. There was something about this that was attractive and which retained the sympathy of all. It is one of the deep events of the day which had a mystical meaning attached to it by Durandus¹ in the thirteenth century, though the practical bearing of it was condemned in the twelfth century,² as canon law forbade two meals. But the popular will was too great for canons; and when Durandus recounted³ the canons condemning the breach of the Lenten fast on this day, he added, 'In most parts of the world these canons are not kept; it must be considered whether they had better be maintained or not.' Since his day there have been no canons of any note which have taken cognizance of the matter.

The other observances of this great day have no particular bearing on the question of this essay, and none of them save the lavipedium, or washing of the feet, at all equalled the Maundy in interest. It is remarkable that as in many parts the feet-washing was objected to on the ground that it detracted from the honour due to the Sacrament of Baptism, so in some parts the Maundy

¹ *Rationale*, lib. vi. cap. lxxv. § 7. Belet, who lived in the twelfth century, speaks of this division of the meal as a necessary part of the *mandatum*. 'First, the priests must give the poor a repast, and afterwards eat a little but not more than usual. Then they must rise from table and wash the feet of the poor. When this has been done they can sit down again at the table and eat again, which does not break the fast, but interrupts it. For no man must eat twice on that day, that the fast be not broken.'—*Rationale Div. Officiorum*, cap. xcvi. Belet is commonly printed at the end of Durandus; cf. *Rationale*, Lugduni, 1584, fo. 532.

² See the *Gloss. de Consecra.* dist. iii. cap. vii. *jejunium*: 'Because the Lord rose from Supper and washed the feet of His disciples, and again returned to Supper, therefore some wish to wash the feet of others, and to make two meals, after the manner of the Lord: but this custom is condemned.'

³ Durandus, *De Concilio Celebrando*, part iii. tit. xiii. Parisiis, 1545, pp. 174, 175.

was interpreted to lower the dignity of the other Gospel Sacrament.

In our own country the handing round the loving cup after the washing of the feet was a striking part of the ceremonies, and this certainly would have been regarded by St. Augustine as breaking the strictness of the Lenten fast. This lingered on after the washing of the feet passed away. 'After ye blessing ye Lord Almoner calls for wine and drinks to all ye poore ye Kings health,' was the rubric in 1664,¹ which would have a somewhat unseemly aspect in a solemn service in church, were it not for its affinity to the loving cup in the Sarum office. At Salisbury, in the Cathedral renowned throughout the world for its beauty and its beautiful 'use,' there was on Maundy Thursday a certain regulated portion of wine handed to all the officials and dignitaries of the Cathedral, the higher dignitaries receiving a larger portion, as was suitable to their office. Hence probably arose the custom of the 'Maundy Ale.' This *Caritatis potus* was clearly the shrunken representative of the ancient *Cæna Domini* for the better class, as the Maundy, or feast for the poor whose feet were washed, was its representative for the poor.

In our own day the Maundy is still represented by the ghost of a departed ceremony, when ushers in white scarves marshal the poor in the Royal Chapel to receive the Maundy, now wholly commuted for a money payment. So that the ancient *Cæna Domini* is now chiefly known amongst us by the name 'Maundy money,' though churchmen still keep alive the name Maundy Thursday.

Though this most ancient custom only exists amongst us now in name, yet that name should be a continual reminder that there is no inherent dishonour to the

¹ In a copy of the first edition of Sparrow's *Canons*, in the Cathedral library at Salisbury, there is a contemporary manuscript on the fly-leaf at the end containing the order of the Maundy in 1664. The book is probably one of those given to the Cathedral library by Canon Izaak Walton, son of 'Honest Izaak.'

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Blessed Sacrament in the fact of its being received after food taken since the next preceding midnight. Had the Apostles ordained Fasting Communion, the Maundy would never have been observed; had there been any inherent irreverence in non-Fasting Communion, the Maundy would not have been condemned at Constantinople only on the ground of the honour due to Lent. It is most remarkable that the only reason given for the discontinuance of communicating after food on Maundy Thursday is that it has been abrogated by the contrary custom.¹

The discontinuance of the Maundy, therefore, may be claimed in favour of the argument of this essay about the abrogation of canons by disuser. Just as the fast after Communion was abrogated by the contrary custom, and just as the communicating after food on Maundy Thursday has been abrogated by the contrary custom, so in England whatever canons were in force for Fasting Communion have been abrogated by disuser and the admission of the contrary custom.

¹ Gratian, iii. *De Cons.* Dist. i. cap. xlix. § *Exceptio*: 'Derogatum est per contrariam consuetudinem.' Mazzolini, *Summa Summarum*, s.v. *Lex*, Lugduni, 1551, pars ii. p. 139. It is only the communicating after food that comes under this head of abrogation. For the Cardinals at Rome, and many prelates elsewhere on the Continent, do not allow the *fast* on this day to become abrogated by disuser.

CHAPTER II.

INTERPRETATION OF CANONS.

IT is an old principle of law, that canons must be understood by having respect to the times and manners of the places and persons for whom they were first made. Unless this be done, they will be much misunderstood, and be made to press unequally. Now, if we look back to the times when the custom of Fasting Communion was insisted on, it will be found that the meals were very different from what they are now. But here, of course, we meet with much difficulty. Habits in some parts and at some times vary so rapidly, that it is almost impossible to pourtray the habits of a past age with precision, and the rules made for one time soon become inexplicable.

For example, it was part of the discipline of Lent, in Africa at least, that men should wholly abstain from the use of the bath; and St. Augustine traces the breaking the fast on Maundy Thursday, not so much to the desire of celebrating after supper, as to the necessity of eating after the bath. He points out that the catechumens who were about to be baptized at Easter would naturally offend others if they did not bathe first. Hence they bathed on Maundy Thursday. Then followed, as a matter of course, a heavy meal.¹ He does not stop to explain why food was

¹ 'Quia jejunia simul et lavacra tolerare non possunt.'—*Ep. ad Januarius*, Ep. liv. § 9. 'Amongst the Greeks as well as Romans bathing was always a preliminary to the hour of meals. Indeed, the process of eating seems to have followed as a matter of course upon that of bathing; for even Nausicaë and her companions, immediately after they had bathed and anointed them-

CANONS.

Canons must be understood in their own times and manners of life as they were first made. They were first made in a time of misunderstanding, and if we look back to the time when Communion was insisted on, they are very different from ours. Of course, we meet with contradictions and at some times it is impossible to pourtray the meaning and the rules made for

the discipline of Lent, in which they abstin from the pleasures of the senses. The breaking the fast is much to the desire of the flesh. The necessity of eating after Communion, which the catechumens who were not yet baptized could naturally offend against. Hence they bathed on the day after as a matter of course, and this may explain why food was

not fasted. — *Ep. ad Januarium*, where the Romans bathing was always a part of the process of eating seems to be a matter of course; for even Nausicaä bathed and anointed them-

necessary. It was a matter of every day experience amongst them, and he wrote as if it were acknowledged on all hands that this was the case. He says not that the bath was regarded as a breach of the fast, and so the feast did not break the fast more; nor does he say that the bath was of the nature of a Turkish bath, a long, tedious, and exhausting process, which required food; he accepts it as a matter of fact, and says no more about it. He simply says, 'They cannot bear fasting and the use of the bath at the same time.' Some thirty years ago this would probably have been understood of a warm bath, now-a-days a bath would commonly be understood to be a cold sponging bath, and the impossibility of fasting at the same time as a man used his bath would not seem natural in modern times.

In similar manner, the time and character of meals have so entirely changed, that it is difficult to enter into the canons and sermons of former days. Probably the customs may have varied less abroad than in our island. The meals in Italy seem to have been a slight meal at daybreak, a full meal about eleven o'clock, and a heavy meal in the evening. The mid-day meal was naturally of some importance, as is the pranzo of modern Italy. The writer, after a hot walk through Rome, arrived at San Clemente so perilously near the hour of pranzo that the bonny monk in charge could not let him see the church, and yet it wanted

only a few minutes to get to the river. The writer, however, sat down to eat by the river's side while waiting for the clothes to dry. — *Smith's Dictionary of Antiquities*, s.v. *Baths*. Men used to bathe to get an appetite.

¹ See *Smith's Dictionary of Antiquities*, s.v. *Cena*. The writer of that article takes the time of Augustus as the date of his description; but probably in the country places at least there was not much variation in the hours. These are nearly the same in Italy now. I lately spent three days in an Italian coasting steamer with peasants only for fellow-passengers. These took bread and wine at daybreak, or when they woke; a meal of two or three courses (if they could afford it) about 11 A.M., and a more pretentious meal about 3 P.M. The allowance of the cabin passengers began with a cup of coffee in the early morning, if desired, with two meals, one of four, the other of five or six courses. One meal began with hard-boiled eggs, and ended with fruit: 'ab ovo usque ad mala.' — *Horace, Sat. I. iii. 6*.

twenty minutes of eleven. The substantial character of the meal is relieved by the siesta during the extreme heat of the day. In the East, too, there seem evidences that the mid-day meal was apt to be accompanied with symptoms of repletion, which are said to be regarded by men of rank in Mexico and India as compliments due to the hospitality of the host. This is more fully shown in a subsequent section.

Indeed, there was some little to be said in excuse of this. There was no beverage but water, or some fermented and therefore intoxicating drink. The life of the Nazarite, therefore, was one of perpetual fasting; he could drink nothing but water. It was reserved for Christians to invent beverages as a substitute for wine in times of fasting, or to introduce them from unexplored heathen lands. Coffee is said to have been invented to drink in fasts; but this was unknown in Europe till comparatively modern times.

It must then be remembered that in times when Fasting Communion was introduced, excess in eating was the rule and not the exception; and in order that men might come reverently to Communion, it was necessary that the rule should be that they should come fasting.¹ And this not only to Communion, but to Baptism, Confirmation, and Ordination, whether as bishop, priest, catechumen, or candidate. This, too, probably led to the rule in some parts that none should eat directly after Communion, lest excess should so soon dishonour their service.

But amongst us the habit of excessive eating at one or two meals has generally passed away, and lighter meals are perhaps taken oftener; so that a man after a light dinner and tea overnight, and a light breakfast in the morning, will, in this cold climate, be probably more fasting

¹ The picture drawn by the Welsh priest, Sir Thomas Malory, of the daily life of King Arthur and the Knights of his Round Table, could not have seemed very unnatural in the fifteenth century. It is a picture of gross feeding, hard fighting, and luxurious immorality.

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Still, though there was good reason for this, the effect was to decrease the number of communicants rapidly.¹ We find St. Chrysostom complaining that they stood close enough in church to hear him preach, but that almost all left the church without communicating. Therefore we find the canons soon accommodating themselves to the relaxed rule,² and only requiring three Communions in the year, at Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost.³ This, again, soon

¹ Compare the remarkable custom mentioned by Mr. Scudamore:—'In the Swedish Church the celebrant very rarely communicates at all. . . . They seem to have fallen into this most uncatholic practice and opinion from the strictness with which confession was required of them before communion. It was often difficult in that country for the priest to meet with a confessor,' &c. —*Notitia Eucharistica*, p. 605.

² See Scudamore, *Notitia Eucharistica*, p. 806, sq.

³ Gratian (*Decretum*, pars iii.; *De Consecr.* dist. ii. cap. xvi.) quotes Pope Fabian (A.D. 250) as upholding this; but Berardi points out that the citation is from the *Capitularia Regum Francorum*, of the ninth century. (*Gratiani Canones Genuini ab Apocryphis Discreti*, Matriti, 1783, vol. ii. p. 120; on these Capitularia see Van Espen, *De Capitularibus*, tom. iii. p. 477.) The first Council of Toledo bears witness to the decline of piety, condemning those who come to church but never communicate. (Co. Toletanum I. can. xiii. A.D. 400.) The rule seems to have been first formulated in the sixth century, at the Council of Agde (A.D. 506). (Bruno, *Canones*, 1839, pars altera, p. 150; Co. Agathense, can. xviii.) It is true that Gratian quotes a canon of Elvire (A.D. 305), but it is not found amongst the eighty-one canons of that Council; and Berardi (vol. i. p. 31) shows that the matter of the canon does not agree with the fourth-century times. The rule of Agde was accepted at Tours in A.D. 813, in the fourth Council of Tours.—Fleury, *Hist. Eccl.* vol. x. p. 151, 1704.

dropped down to once a year, at Easter.¹ Then again, casuistry, in the course of time, settled that it was only a Church regulation that men must communicate once a year, but if they communicated once before death, receiving the Viaticum, this was sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the divine law. Thus the state of things represented in the north of France a few years back (spoken of in the Introduction) came about, and the English Church at the Reformation set herself to try and remedy it; and did this by not insisting upon the ceremonial part of the custom of Fasting Communion.

But perhaps some will endeavour to argue, that to communicate fasting is a custom which cannot be altered, since it is of natural or divine law. No doubt it is so in part but it consists in part of divine law, in part of human positive law. The portion which is of divine law natural is immutable, as has been seen; but this is the reason, or moral part of the custom—viz. that extreme reverence must accompany the act of faithful Communion; the human positive law was, that the way in which this reverence was to manifest itself was in remaining fasting till after the act of communion. This may be changed.² If, when men were gross feeders, it was necessary to make them attend service fasting, it does not follow that, when habits have entirely changed, the same strictness must be continued. In Italy and the East the work of the day used to commence commonly at three or four o'clock in the morning,³ and the synaxis seems to have been about nine

¹ This was the rule formulated in A.D. 1215, at the fourth Lateran Council, can. xxi., under pain of excommunication and being refused burial.—Fleury, *Hist. Eccl.* vol. xvi. p. 400, 1712.

² 'That the Lord's Supper is sacredly and with reverence to be received is taught us by the Apostles; but whether this reverence ought to be expressed by taking it *virgine saliva*, fasting or not fasting, the Apostles left the Churches to their choice.'—Bishop Jeremy Taylor, *Ductor Dubitantium*, bk. iii. chap. iv. Rule 12, § 7, 1855, vol. x. p. 338.

³ Martial seems to tell us that the *jentaculum*, or early morning meal, was taken about 3 or 4 A.M.—Smith's *Dictionary*, s.v. *Cena*.

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o'clock. This does not make it a necessary act of devotion now to communicate at seven o'clock in the morning, when the main work of the day does not commence till nine or ten o'clock. The invention of gas has wholly altered the manner of life in England; and the Church has in every age shown her Catholic elasticity in accommodating her rule to that of the country of her children, bringing Christianity to leaven the daily social life, and not endeavouring to stem the course of the river. When the synaxis was at 9 A.M., the work of life for the day had been going on for some four or five hours: so this would about answer to a celebration at noon with us, when a man might be called fasting, if he willingly abstained from food after his breakfast at half-past eight or nine o'clock. Canons of discipline have always been variable with change of habits, as is reasonable; and in England it is here contended, there is now no canon binding on the conscience which enforces Fasting Communion. Remarkably enough, there is no such canon alluded to by Durandus in the digest of canons spoken of above; there is none such in Lyndwood; there is none such incorporated in the *Cantela* of the Sarum Missal: it cannot therefore be maintained that the foreign canons, or even the Anglo-Saxon canons on the subject, were regarded as binding on the conscience of the laity (for with them alone are we concerned); if there were, they would without doubt appear somewhere. No, it depends not upon canons, but upon custom; and this has been so long unenforced, that by the obtaining of the contrary custom it has been voided of all force affecting the conscience. Whether it be advisable as a matter of discipline or devotion is another question altogether; it is only now contended that it does not bind the conscience.

Nay more, as the moral of the custom is that extreme reverence accompany the act of Communion, it is a question whether the usual light breakfast of modern England, less heating than the bread and wine of the acratisma of Greece,

or the jentaculum of Italy, does not in some cases quiet the volatile activity of the mind in the morning, and enable some persons to control their thoughts and train them to a greater reverence.

Certainly, nature teaches us that severity of fasting comes from hot countries, and that cold climates require more constant food.¹ Most instances of prolonged fasting are to be found in the East; most instances of *polyphagie* (as the French call it) are in colder climates. Once more, the excessive work (at all events in London and large towns of England) crowded into one day renders more frequent food necessary; and it is to be gravely doubted whether a priest, who lies in bed till eleven o'clock, if he has to celebrate at mid-day, in order that he may have fasted from midnight with impunity, is serving God with his time as well as one who takes a light breakfast to enable him to do some work for God before mid-day.

Be this as it may, we must be sure that we fully understand the habits and times when Fasting Communion was insisted on, before we assert that it is of perpetual obligation, binding the faithful laity as well as clergy.

¹ It is noteworthy that the first commutation of the corporal penance of fasting into the recitation of psalms or money payment comes from *Britain*. This is first found in the Penitential of Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury. This politic man, Greek as he was, found that fasting could not be maintained in Britain, and therefore ordered that, 'Instead of living for a year upon bread and water, the penitent might sing fifty psalms on his knees, or give a certain sum to the poor, or procure a presbyter to say a mass for him,' &c.—See Marshall's *Penitential Discipline*, Oxford, 1844, p. 132. This Penitential became universally received throughout the West. John Johnson writes: 'There are many who cannot communicate fasting without great uneasiness and indevotion, unless they go directly from their bed to the Altar; and these men must indulge the cravings of an inferior nature so far as to quiet their spirits, and preserve a due attention of mind in the service of God.' See below, at the end of the essay.

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SECTION I.—*The meaning of 'Jejunus.'*

This is one of those words to which successive generations of casuists have attached a technical meaning unknown to early Christian writers. In the earliest ages of Christianity it had the general meaning of self-restraint with respect to food, especially undertaken in the fear of God. But when the eager love of Christians had cooled down, and more precise rules became practically needful, fasting gradually became subject to more exact definition. But we have to be careful lest with our modern sense of a technical meaning of 'jejunus' we read the canons of the ancients, and attach the modern meaning to the word. This would be to imitate the example of the student who, being much impressed with the desirability of a celibate clergy, translated in St. Augustine 'nos singuli' by 'we who are unmarried.'

In the seventh century St. Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologies* derives 'jejunus' from the medical use of the word.¹ A certain part of the viscera is called the *jejunum* because it is always found empty on dissection. The bishop reversed the right order, but showed that he attached the same meaning to the word that physiologists had done centuries before: they regarded it as meaning that emptiness which gives rise to a sense of hunger. In this sense it was used by classical writers both physically and metaphorically. Cicero speaks of men's ears being 'empty' of eloquence,² meaning they had not heard what they were anxious and eager to hear. We find it used of men who had no opportunity of satisfying their hunger,

¹ 'Cui nomen est inditum ex quâdam parte viscerum tenui semper et vacuâ, quod vulgò *jejunum* vocatur.'—*Origines*, lib. vi. cap. xix.; *Opera*, Coloniae Agrippinæ, 1617, p. 52 c. Bopp derives the word from a root '*jam*, refrænare, cohibere.'—See Pott, *Etymologische Forschungen*, 1833, i. 262.

² *Jejunas* igitur hujus multiplicis et æquabiliter in omnia genera fusæ orationis aures civitatis accepimus.—*Orator*, cap. xxx. § 106; *Opera*, Lipsiæ, 1827, p. 157.

who were taking no full meals.¹ Further on we shall see that the general habits were to eat to satiety at meals, and to take at least two meals a day. If a man did not take two full meals a day, he would be said to be fasting; and the same seems common to Greek and Latin. The most noteworthy example of this use of the word is to be found in St. Luke's account of St. Paul's shipwreck. The apostle addressed the sailors and said,² 'This is the fourteenth day that ye have continued *fasting*, having taken nothing.' If these words meant literally and baldly having taken no food at all, the physiologists would tell us this were impossible. Men lying in bed with all their functions acting slowly could not live fourteen days without food, even were there some comatose state or some diseased suspension of vitality. But for men in constant exertion of body and anxiety of mind, with unusual demands upon their physical resources, to remain alive and vigorous after fourteen days without food of any sort or kind, is a physiological impossibility. We cannot suppose that there was in this instance a special intervention of Almighty God as in the case of Moses and Elijah probably, for these rough sailors were certainly not Christians, and probably heathens. Indeed, St. Paul's advice to them to take some food showed that he did not regard them as sustained miraculously without the need of ordinary support. We must believe, then, that the apostle spoke in a manner which the sailors would have understood to mean that they had had no opportunity or inclination to prepare and partake of regular meals; they snatched what food they could whenever it was possible. This, as we should expect, is the

¹ Sometimes it simply has the meaning of not having taken any food, without having respect to length of time at all. Thus a deputation to a queen were asked not to do dishonour to the royal hospitality by leaving the palace without taking anything to eat or drink; '*ne jejuniis a regali domo recedat*.'—St. Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, lib. viii. cap. xxxi. Parisiis, 1561, p. 468; *Opera*, 1699, col. 404.

² Acts xxvii. 33.

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explanation of Cornelius a Lapide, who on the word
'jejuni' here has the comment:—

Not that they had really eaten nothing, but very little and
irregularly, just as much as was necessary to keep them alive. . . .
When, therefore, he says *taking nothing*, he means very little, and
as good as nothing; or nothing in comparison with a regular and
proper *prandium* or *cena*, but taking a little by snatches rather
than taking a regular meal.

Hammond in his commentary on the passage has a
quotation which is very much to the point from a commen-
tator on Hesiod, who had said 'and they ate no meat':—

Because they were not at leisure or quiet even at meal times,
but all in their armour, with their hands defiled with blood; there-
fore he said, 'neither did they eat meat,' for the meal time is a
time of leisure and rejoicing.

The same too is seen in the progress of St. Luke's
narrative, for he goes on to say:—'When they had eaten
to satiety (*κορεθίντες*) they lightened the ship.' On the
advice and encouragement of the apostle they for the first
time during the storm had a regular meal, of which they
partook to the full.

It was the habit to take a mouthful or two of food on
rising from bed in the early morning before going to work:
this small portion of food, not regarded as a meal, was
sometimes called a 'continuation of fasting,'¹ because it
reckoned as nothing.

¹ *Διασησιμὸς* really means 'a continuance of the fast,' and is spoken of by
Athenæus as one of the names of the early morning snack, like the German
Wackenbrød. Athenæus (lib. i. § 19, Tauchnitz, tom. i. p. 19) quotes a passage
which implies that this was but a small portion of food. 'I will take a little
breakfast, and will come again after I have taken two or three bites of bread,'
ἄπρου θίς ἢ τρίς ἀποδακνῶν. Then he says, *τὸν μὲν οὖν ἀκρατισμὸν διασησιμὸν*
ἔλεγον, 'they used to call the acratismus a continuation of the fast.' On
this Casaubon has a note: 'Proprie *διασησιμὸς* est jejunii continuatio:
διασησιμὸς ad finem usque jejunare. Qui apud Græcos primi auctores hujus
moris fuere, facti invidiam verbo isto levatum iverunt, quasi non tam levi hoc
cibo insititio jejunium frangerent quam illud præstarent ut ad præscriptum
morbis aut religione jejunii finem possent durare.'—Is. Casauboni *Animad-*
versiones in Athenæum, Lugduni, 1600, p. 19.

In general, then, the early meaning of *jejunus* was very nearly akin to 'hungry.' But hunger may be voluntary or involuntary; so we find that *jejunus* became appropriated to voluntary hunger for the sake of religion. Still the original meaning of the word did not wholly die out, and it is remarkably preserved in the modern French names of meals. The second heavy meal of the day is called 'dîner.' This is derived from the mediæval word 'disnare,' which Du Cange regards as a contraction of *dejejunare*, 'to break the fast.' It may be said that this used to be the name of the first heavy meal of the day, and as this meal became later and later, the name still clung to it. But granting that it was the first heavy meal of the day, there was the early slight refection before it; and as the *dîner* became later, the *déjeuner* became of more and more importance, and has now become the first regular meal. Still there is the previous cup of coffee or chocolate; so that the jejunium departed from is but the natural hunger which arises between meals.

But in early Christian writings this hunger, self-imposed for the sake of religion, was self-restraint either in the quantity or the quality of the food. This is most clearly seen in the exhaustive homily of St. Basil on fasting,¹ where he uses every argument to persuade men to fast. It was a common saying in early times that Adam's life in Paradise was a fast. This perhaps would be surprising to modern ears. We have been accustomed to contrast the temptation of our Blessed Lord after a protracted fast with the temptation of Adam in the midst of all that he could desire. But Adam's life was said to be a fast for several reasons; ² first because he was not to eat of a certain tree.

¹ *De Jejunio*, I. *Opera*, ed. Gaume, 1839, tom. ii. p. 1.

² Tertullian, *De Jeuniis*, cap. iii. Parisiis, 1675, p. 545 C: 'Salvus alioquin, si uni arbusculæ jejunare maluisset.' St. Basil, *De Jejunio*, I. § 3, &c.; St. Ambrose, *De Elia et Jejunio*, cap. iv. Parisiis, 1836, tom. i. p. 359. St. Ambrose said that the first five days of Creation were days of fasting, because there is no word of eating.

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So far forth as the tree of knowledge was concerned Adam was fasting while he was sinless, and his refusal to keep the fast in that particular caused the fall of man. But still he was fasting for two other reasons: because he did not eat flesh meat, and because he drank no wine, the use of which had not yet been made known. From this we learn that a man would be called fasting if he exercised self-restraint and self-discipline in respect of food, by abstaining from this or that kind of food, and in particular from flesh and wine.

We can, then, understand how one going to martyrdom in forenoon would reject a cup of wine,¹ since this would break his fast, and he would be martyred having just broken the ecclesiastical discipline. Similarly we find that a fisherman, finding he was out of wine when the feast of the Epiphany approached, prayed to St. Martin, 'Most holy Martin, send me some wine for this sacred festival, lest while others are feasting I remain *fasting*.' This only had respect to wine, for we do not hear that the fisherman ran short of other food.²

In early times this religious self-restraint in respect of food was much left to the individual conscience, and this was true discipline. Cassiodorus, who as a secular magistrate of consular rank had great knowledge of men and how to deal with men before he was made a bishop, ascribes the liberty in this respect to the wisdom of the Apostles, who left this to the conscience and discretion of the individual. None can read much of the ancient fathers without discovering that there was great diversity in fasting, and that this diversity arose from the liberty of the individual Christian to make his own rule. The Church said *when* her members were to fast, but left it to them to determine *how* they would obey her direction.

¹ Prudentius, Hymn 6, *De Cor.* 54, *Opera*, Romæ, 1788, tom. ii. p. 1029.

² St. Gregory of Tours, *De Miraculis S. Martini*, lib. ii. cap. xvi.; *Opera*, Parisiis, 1699, col. 1048, 'ne ego *jejunus* remaneam.'

Nor need we be surprised at this: there was in those early times no defined rule, because there was not so much necessity for external rules when each man was more ready to be guided by the custom of his own Church. Then the rule lately adopted by the 'Old Catholics' at their first synod was fully recognized. 'It does not fall within the competence of a Church authority to lay down special regulations or laws respecting the extent, the nature, or manner of fasting, because the methods of its exercise are determined by circumstances of climate as well as by the occupation, customs, and bodily constitutions of each individual.'

One meaning then of *jejunus* has reference to the quality of food taken; but another general meaning was connected with the quantity of food taken during the day.

Those who wished to be *fasting* during Lent omitted the meal of the forenoon, that is, the *ariston* amongst the Greeks, the *prandium* amongst the Latins. Whether this really affected or not the taking of the *Weckenbrod*, the stay-stomach at waking, is not easily to be determined. Certainly with some so small a portion of food was not regarded as a breach of the fast, though it may have been different with others where no particular definition prevailed. A man, as we have seen, might be called *fasting* if he had taken no set serious meal: but the forenoon meal was regarded as breaking the fast.

There is abundant evidence of this, and a remarkable illustration of it is found in the Canon of Hippo, which, as the first canon about Fasting Communion, occupies a good deal of our attention. In this canon the word *jejunus* is clearly synonymous with *non pransus*; ¹ that is, a man is

¹ This is seen not only from the language of the canon itself, but from the expression used by the bishops legate of Mauritania Sitiphensis, about this canon: 'De sacrificiis inhibendis *post prandium* ut ab *jejunis* offerantur.' (*Codex Ecclesie Africanae*, can. xlvii.; Justelli *Bibliotheca*, tom. i. p. 351, Parisiis, 1661.) Also in St. Augustine's commentary on, or explanation of, the

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fasting if he have not taken the *prandium*. The canon says that a man may not celebrate otherwise than fasting, nor if he have taken the *prandium* may he celebrate for the commendatory of the soul of anyone, not even of a bishop. But in this canon Maundy Thursday was excepted from the rule of fasting celebration. Now this exception was held to countenance a breach of the *Lenten* fast. For three hundred years¹ was this Canon of Hippo regarded as militating against the strictness of the *Lenten* fast. But why? At first sight there seems no connection between the canon and the *Lenten* fast: for the canon only says that a man need not be fasting when he celebrated. And if the technical 'fast of nature'—that is, the fast from the chiming of midnight—had been known when the canon was written, there need have been no question about the *Lenten* fast. For as St. Augustine points out, it is quite possible for a man to keep the fast of Lent by not taking the *prandium*, and still communicate after food after three o'clock in the afternoon. But we get a help to the meaning from the question that Januarius asked of St. Augustine, 'Must we *fast, and* come to the oblation *after food*?' This shows that the only fast then known was what moderns would call an ecclesiastical fast; and the canon was interpreted to mean that a man might break the ecclesiastical fast on that day and take the *prandium*, as well as the *Dominica Cæna*, before he communicated. St. Augustine, who ought to know the meaning of the canon first passed in his own time at his own city of Hippo, allows the possibility of this interpretation.² When, therefore, the Trullan Council declined to re-enact this canon three

Canon, as it would seem, he gives as a reason for the double celebration on Maundy Thursday: 'Mane propter *prandentes*, ad vespem vero propter *jejunantes*.'—Ep. liv. (al. 118), cap. vii. § 9, Parisiis, 1688, tom. ii. col. 127.

¹ It was first formulated A.D. 393, and in A.D. 692 the Trullan Council said it dishonoured the *Lenten* fast.

² See this discussed below in the Chapter on St. Augustine, part iii. chapter xii.

hundred years after it was first formulated, they did so, not at all on the ground of greater reverence for the Blessed Sacrament, but wholly and entirely on the ground that it recognized a breach of Lent; and this could only be on the supposition that if a man need not on that day be *jejunus*, he might take the *prandium*, the taking of which caused a breach of the fast. From this we may see that the fast spoken of in the Canon of Hippo was an ecclesiastical fast, and in no sense the modern 'natural fast.'

That fasting had the sense of not taking the forenoon meal may be seen from many passages,¹ some few of which may be taken to prove the rule. St. Paulinus of Nola (died A.D. 431), writing playfully about a man who had come to stay with him, says,² 'When the Paschal solemnity recalled the days of *prandia*.' Easter recalled the morning meal which the fast of Lent had taken away. Similarly St. Jerome writes³ when speaking of some ascetics. These, he says, had the same rule of fasting all the year round, for they never took more than one full meal. He then goes on to show how they combined the keeping the ecclesiastical tradition and their own self-appointed discipline; for during the great forty days of Easter, when it would have been heresy to fast, '*cœnæ mutantur in prandia*,' their dinners were changed into luncheons; that is, instead of

¹ There are many passages in the Epistle of St. Augustine to Casulanus which show that this was his idea of a *jejunium*: 'In hujus Sabbati *jejunio* sive *prandio*,' i.e. fasting or not: 'alios Sabbato *prudentes*, alios *jejunantes*.' Of Easter Eve he says: 'Ut etiam illi Sabbati *jejunium* devotissime celebrent, qui ceteris per totum annum Sabbatis *prudent*.' (Ep. xxxvi. §§ 5, 26, 31, 32, &c.; *Opera*, Parisiis, 1688, tom. ii. col. 69 seq.) Similarly in the sixth century, at the second Council of Tours (A.D. 567), the rule laid down for the fast of the monks shows that this depended on the taking or omission of the *prandium*: 'Ut de Paschâ usque ad Quinquagesimam [i.e. Pentecost; so Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* lib. x. cap. xxxi.; Co. Aurelian I. can. xxv. (A.D. 511); St. Aug. Ep. lv. § 29, &c.] exceptis Rogationibus omni die fratribus *prandium* prepararetur; post Quinquagesimam tota hebdomade ex asse *jejunent*,' &c.—Co. Turon. II. can. xvii.; Bruns, ii. 229.

² 'Ut solemnitas Paschalis revocavit dies *prandiorum*,' Ep. xv. ed. Migne, col. 227.

³ Ep. xxli. § 35; *Opera*, Veronæ, 1734, tom. i. col. 118.

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col. 118.

taking their one meal in the afternoon they took it in the morning. By taking their full meal in the forenoon they kept the feast and satisfied the ecclesiastical tradition, while by only taking one meal in the day they gratified their own discipline. To the same purpose there is a curious canonical answer of Theophilus of Alexandria.¹ On a certain year the fixed fast of the Epiphany fell on a Sunday, and the decision of the bishop was invoked to solve the difficulty and say what should be done; for here was a Sunday, and to fast on a Sunday was heretical, while to ignore the Epiphany fast was antagonistic to ecclesiastical tradition. The bishop suggested a compromise. If men took some food in the forenoon, this would satisfy the Sunday requirements; while if they only took a few dates, this would be of a fasting character. This again shows that the omission or taking the morning meal constituted a fast or feast. If a man did not take the *prandium* he was reckoned as *jejunus*.²

But as time went on men began more and more to enquire what was the meaning of *jejunus*, and more and more exact definitions were issued.

In the seventh century, St. Isidore of Seville (died A.D. 636) in his book of *Origines* has definitions of fasting, which show that in his day there was no such distinction known as the *jejunium naturæ*, the fast from the previous midnight.³ According to his definitions fasting was much the same as abstemiousness. He distinguishes between a fast, a station, and xerophagy. A station was a regularly appointed fast, on certain set days; whereas an ordinary fast

¹ *Σύνοδος αλεξανδρινή*, Athens, 1854, tom. iv. p. 342.

² This canonical answer also shows that the Patriarch of Alexandria in the fifth century did not reckon the taking a slight portion of food in the morning a bar to communicating in the afternoon; for he orders that the Synaxis be celebrated after three o'clock in the afternoon, to pay due honour to the fast, and bids men eat some dates to do honour to the Lord's day. He would hardly have made this canon if he had thought the dates eaten since midnight would prevent celebration or communion. See below, part iii. chapter ix.

³ *Origines*, lib. vi. cap. xix.; *Opera*, Colonie Agrippinæ, 1617, p. 52 G.

was a voluntary abstinence: while xerophagy was the abstaining from moist food and taking only dry bread. If we compare this with a modern definition, we shall at once see the difference.

ST. ISIDORE, A.D. 636.

Jejunium est parsimonia
victus abstinentiaque ciborum.

COZZA,¹ A.D. 1724.

Jejunium corporale prout a
parsimonia secernitur aliud est
quod naturale, aliud ecclesiasticum appellatur.

Here the difference is very observable. In the seventh century there is no trace of any such meaning as that of a natural fast.

Gradually the word *jejunus* came to mean when digestion was complete. Now the ancients observed that there was some connection between a full stomach and sleep,² so the question arose in ecclesiastical definitions as to whether sleep was necessary or not to complete digestion. Thus there is a statute quoted by Du Cange³ which runs as follows:—'Let no one, unless he have slept in the night, and unless his digestion be complete, presume to celebrate, because he is not reckoned fasting. But if his digestion be over, though no act of sleep have preceded, yet he may lawfully celebrate: but though sleep have preceded, yet if digestion be not complete, he may not celebrate.' Here there is most stress laid upon the completion of digestion; just as there is in the gloss of Bartholomew of Brescia (most probably) upon the Canon of Hippo as given in Gratian:—

But when shall a man be called *fasting*? Say that I eat to-day, and sleep not by day nor night, am I fasting at the beginning

¹ *Tractatus Dogmatico-Moralis de Jejunio Ecclesiastico*, Romæ, 1724, p. I.

² St. Ambrose is only expressing the common idea when he says of night, 'Tunc fervet carnis illecebra; tunc tentata illudit: coquitur cibus, potusque digeritur.'—In Psalmum cxviii., expositio, Sermo viii. § 46; *Opera*, Parisiis, Gauthier, 1836, tom. ii. p. 287.

³ Under the word 'Missa, missam celebrare,' Parisiis, 1845, tom. iv. p. 434.

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CH. II.]

Interpretation of Canons.

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of another day? Some say that I am. (*Extra de temp. ord. literas.*)
Otherwise sleep would be said to break the fast, which I do not
believe; but I say that *the fast exists when digestion is complete.*

This was the opinion of the great canonist about 1250
A.D. Hitherto there has been no trace of any question of
a fast from midnight, or any such term or notion as that of
a 'natural' fast; the only conception we find of the defini-
tion of a fasting man is a man with an empty stomach.

But it was difficult to say when digestion was complete.
Some said it was not complete so long as a man was con-
scious of having eaten this or that food. But this was
uncertain, for the perception of some fragrant roots re-
mained even after sharp hunger persuaded a man that his
digestion was complete. Hitherto no Alexis St. Martin
had appeared to allow the process of digestion to be
periodically investigated;¹ it was, therefore, quite clear
that some further definition was wanted to make the
matter sufficiently intelligible.

St. Thomas Aquinas is the first to solve the difficulty
so far as I can discover. He came forward in his 'Summa'
and distinguished between various kinds of fasting.² 'Fast-
ing is of two kinds, the one that of nature, which is required
before taking the Eucharist; and this is broken by any
drink, even of water, after which even it is not lawful to
take the Eucharist. There is another fast of the Church
which is called *the fast of the faster*; and this is not broken
except by such things as the Church intended to forbid by
instituting the fast.' This was but twenty years after the
definition of Bartholomew of Brescia, last cited; but it met
the difficulty, for there only remained to determine when
the *fast of nature* commenced, and all would be quite clear
and straightforward. St. Thomas says it began with the

¹ Alexis St. Martin was a French Canadian, whose stomach had been
lacerated by a shot. This was healed in a most remarkable way by a kind of
flap which allowed of inspection.

² *Summa*, Secunda Secundæ, Quest. cxlvii. art. 7, ad Secundum; Venetiis,
1756, tom. iv. p. 178.

day, but, because various people reckoned their days differently, it was necessary that one should be chosen. Now the Roman Church began her day at midnight, therefore the day of the fast was to begin from midnight, and a man might not eat any food between the stroke of midnight and celebration. Here, then, is the first notice we have of this distinction ; and now begins the idea of some symbolism, which arises from the convenience of having a purely technical rule of fasting. This is not traceable further back than the thirteenth century. But even then it did not command universal assent, for some in the fourteenth century said that a man might take ginger or electuaries by way of stay-stomach, and yet not interfere with the fast before Communion. In other words, they still maintained that the fast was ecclesiastical, and ignored the so-called 'natural' fast.

But the authority of St. Thomas Aquinas gradually won acceptance for the notion, which was also very convenient by accuracy of definition, that a man was fasting, ready for celebration and Communion, at five minutes past twelve o'clock at night, though he only finished eating when the clock began to chime. This notion exclusively now prevails at Rome. But this is remarkably different from the old definition, which made it depend upon completion of digestion. Therefore it is vain that men now quote the Canon of Hippo as favouring their notion of Fasting Communion, since the word *jejunus* has now a very different meaning attached to it from what it bore of old. The definition of the fast of nature as necessary for Communion, and distinct from the ecclesiastical fast, is unknown before the middle of the thirteenth century.

It is vain also that men argue, from the supposed 'symbolic fast commencing with a symbolic day,' in favour of a material carnal Presence of our Blessed Saviour. If the symbolism commenced, as it seems to have done, not earlier than the thirteenth century, we can scarcely with

tioned their days difficult to be chosen. Now at midnight, therefore at midnight, and a man at the stroke of midnight first notice we have of the idea of some symbol of having a purely not traceable further it even then it did not in the fourteenth century ginger or electuaries interfere with the fast they still maintained ignored the so-called

St. Aquinas gradually was also very content that a man was fasting, at five minutes past only finished eating his notion exclusively remarkably different it depend upon communicating vain that men now during their notion of *jejunus* has now a very what it bore of old. necessary for Communion fast, is unknown century.

from the supposed symbolic day,' in favour of Blessed Saviour. If it seems to have done, not we can scarcely with

safety make it the ground of an argument about the teaching of the early Christians. There can be no question about St. Chrysostom's doctrine with respect to the Holy Eucharist, but he has no word of a 'symbolic fast.'

SECTION 2.—*Change of Hours and Habits.*

There is an argument which has been advanced by some to prove the early prevalence of the custom of communicating before the first food of the day was taken, which is indeed lacking in force. It has been said that the early hour of the celebration was a strong argument in favour of no food having been taken before Communion. But there is no force whatever in such an argument; and to show how valueless it is, one example may be taken from the third century.

A patriarch of Alexandria, in giving his decision about the time for breaking the fast on Easter Eve, said that if a man had been careful in his obedience to the law of fasting during Holy Week, then he might be allowed to break his fast at midnight: if, however, he had paid little attention to that law, he was to continue his abstinence until three o'clock in the morning.¹ Now, when was the celebration on Easter Morning? Whatever time be fixed for it, there would be some who were not fasting the 'fast of nature' when the hour arrived. St. Epiphanius speaks of the celebration and Communion being at sunrise,² about four o'clock perhaps. If so, all the communicants would have been allowed by the canonical answer of Dionysius of Alexandria to have broken their fast since midnight. Or if we place the hour of celebration at three o'clock, and those who were negligent and least devout during Holy Week were still

¹ *Ἐντολὴ καὶ κανὼν*, Athens, 1854, tom. iv. p. 1.

² *Adversus Hæreses*, lib. iii. tom. ii. cap. xxii. Colonæ, 1682, tom. i. p. 1105. This was probably the time of the Easter celebration in Gaul, at all events in the sixth century. Cf. St. Gregory of Tours, *Historia*, lib. ii. cap. xxxiv. 1561, p. 102.

fasting, yet the more devout had been allowed to take food three hours before, directly after midnight had struck.

If there were no such canonical answer extant as that of Dionysius, yet would the fallacy of the argument be quickly made apparent by a simple investigation of the facts of the case.

It would seem that the most usual time for celebration, when liberty and peace had been granted to the Church, was nine o'clock in the morning.¹ This was ever regarded as a sacred hour;² and though it has been said that it was so called because the celebration was usually at that hour, yet its sacredness was probably the reason why that especial hour was fixed upon originally. It was regarded as sacred because at that hour the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles at Pentecost,³ and the Church in its fulness was born. It was also regarded as sacred because at that hour the Lord Jesus Himself received sentence from Pilate.⁴ When, therefore, the Church could build her temples in the light of the sun, and could choose her own time for her highest act of worship, it was natural that this sacred hour should be fixed upon for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. There was also another reason for this. In East and West this hour would be before the chief meal of the day. The hour for this meal seems to have varied from ten A.M. to twelve noon; but the sacred hour was at all events before this, which was advisable and even necessary.

¹ For proof of this see the mass of evidence collected by Mr. Scudamore in his invaluable *Notitia Eucharistica*, p. 34.

² Gavanti, *Theaurus*, pars i. tit. xv. § 2; Venetiis, 1769, tom. i. p. 71: 'Tertia hora dicitur sacra, quia sacris Missarum solemnibus dicata, ab Italis Aurea.'—Gratian, *Decretum*, pars i. dist. xlv. cap. xii.

³ Thus Tertullian, *De Jeuniis*, cap. x. *Opera*, Parisiis, 1675, p. 549 B. St. Cyprian, *De Oratione Dominica*, *Opera*, Parisiis, 1726, p. 215; St. Basil, *Regule fusiis Tractata*, Interrog. xxxvii. § 3, *Opera*, Gaume, tom. ii. p. 536; *Sermo Asceticus*, § 4, tom. ii. p. 450; St. Jerome, *Com. in Daniele*, cap. vi. 10, Veronæ, 1736, tom. v. col. 659.

⁴ *Constit. Apostol.* lib. viii. cap. xxxiv.; Clark's *Ante-Nicene Library*, p. 247; St. Ignatius, *Ad Trallenses*, cap. ix. (longer recension); Clark's *Library*, p. 200; St. Athanasius, *De Virginitate*, § 12, *Opera*, 1698, tom. ii. p. 116.

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recension); Clark's Library,
Opera, 1698, tom. ii. p. 116.

For men when they ate a regular meal ate to the full, and were certainly in no condition for a solemn act of worship. This was true even of those who were numbered amongst the communicants in the fourth century, when the Church was rising from the age of persecution. On all hands, therefore, nine o'clock in the morning was the most appropriate hour for celebration; and so long as there was but one celebration at the one altar in a church on a day, this was the usual hour for celebration except on fasting days.

There is no occasion here to go into the question of the hour of service on fasts, because this is really beside the question; for the hour of Communion was postponed because there was a feeling that the Communion broke the fast. When therefore we read of a celebration at noon, or at three in the afternoon, or at six or later in the evening, the chances are strongly in favour of the day being an ecclesiastical fast. But as none would necessarily argue that these hours were 'early,' there is no occasion to do more than mention the existence of such hours of celebration.

Now nine o'clock in the morning cannot in any sense be said to be so early as to make it probable that no food would have been taken before the celebration of that hour. In our own days it would not be so reckoned by the rigorists. Those who now seldom if ever have a late Communion in their churches, celebrate commonly at six, seven, or eight o'clock, and would probably 'speak in a disparaging tone' (as Keble said¹) of a celebration at nine o'clock, as not being quite free from suspicion of laxity. But it was far different in ancient days, and in more southern climes. Men had been up and doing for four or five hours, probably, at nine o'clock, and the work of life in brain and body would have caused waste of tissue, and have promoted hunger.

For we must remember that when a man leaves his bed

¹ *Letters of Spiritual Counsel*, p. 239.

and assumes a vertical position, all the functions of life become at once much more active. While he is in a horizontal position all his muscles are relaxed, there is but little waste of tissue; as a rule the pulse is slower in a man in good health, the brain is less active, and the man is dozing if not asleep. Therefore is it that some rigorist priests lie in bed all Sunday morning if they have to celebrate at mid-day, and reckon their somnolence as true devotion. But the moment a man rises from the horizontal to the vertical posture all his sinews become taut, the pulse quickens in consequence, the heat of the body increases, and the work of life becomes more active because there is greater waste of tissue. This causes in a healthy man the greater craving for food, or hunger, even though he have not been using any violent exertion. The work of life, then, had been in full swing for some four or five hours when the usual hour of celebration came at nine o'clock.¹ It is, then, manifestly a mistake to argue that the usual hour for the celebration was so early as to preclude the probability of a man having taken any food previously.

From the full and gossiping narratives of St. Gregory of Tours we may glean hints of the usual life of a priest in the sixth century, which seem to show that it was not so active nor so wearing as that of a priest in London work at the present time. It may be interesting to trace the daily routine so far as we can, and it will be seen that, if the periods of sleep were more broken than they are now, they recurred more frequently.

The priest then went to bed early, and if the next day were a holy day with a vigil, he rose from sleep to go down to keep vigil. This is referred to more than once. St. Gregory himself on one occasion was loth to get up, and some one, who had woke him twice with words of reproach, boxed his ears the third time with such violence that all

¹ St. Chrysostom points out it is only the glutton and sluggard that lie in bed after sunrise.—*In Acta Apost. hom.* xxxv. § 3, Parisiis, tom. ix. p. 272 E.

the functions of life. While he is in a relaxed, there is but the pulse is slower in a active, and the man is it that some rigorist ning if they have to air somnolence as true es from the horizontal ews become taut, the heat of the body in- es more active because causes in a healthy man er, even though he have The work of life, then, our or five hours when at nine o'clock.¹ It is, that the usual hour for reclude the probability viously.

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thoughts of further slumber were dissipated. In another instance, a bishop and an abbot have a similar dream before keeping vigil;¹ and, again, a bishop is said to *descend*, probably from his couch, to keep the vigil of Christmas.²

When he rose to keep vigil he perchance took a cup of wine. A bishop, calling for this as usual, was poisoned and never reached the church;³ a priest drank so often that he drank too much, and was visited with Divine judgment upon his sin.⁴ Again, a monk, who was persuading some to keep vigil with him, entertained them with a cup of wine, though his store was but small; but the saint in honour of whom vigil was kept was so satisfied with this that the wine was miraculously replenished for the feast of the morrow.⁵

During vigil psalms were sung, and there was time for other occupations: e.g. St. Gregory at one time searched for the relics of saints during a vigil.⁶ Vigils generally ended⁷ with matins, and then all went to bed.⁸

If there were no vigils to keep, the priest rose just before daybreak to say matins. If it were a Sunday or holy day, then matins were said in public, and a bell was

¹ *De Gloriâ Confessorum*, cap. lxxx. Parisii, 1699, col. 963.

² *Historia Francorum*, lib. iii. cap. xvii. Parisii, 1561, p. 138; Parisii, 1699, col. 123.

³ This of the bishop in the last quotation.

⁴ The chief thing remarked upon here is the consecrating when having drunk to excess.—*De Gloriâ Martyrum*, lib. i. cap. lxxxvii. Parisii, 1699, col. 819.

⁵ *De Miraculis S. Juliani*, cap. xxxv. Parisii, 1699, col. 875.

⁶ *Historia Francorum*, lib. x. cap. ult. Parisii, 1561, p. 636.

⁷ As matins were said about one or two in the morning, the vigil did not last much longer probably. In the Council of Auxerre (A.D. 578), held just at this time, it is forbidden to finish the vigil before two o'clock in the morning.—*Co. Antissiodorensis*, can. xi.; Bruns, ii. p. 238.

⁸ *De Gloriâ Martyrum*, lib. i. cap. xi. Parisii, 1699, col. 734; *De Gloriâ Confessorum*, cap. lxxxiv. col. 968. On this occasion the bishop gets up at nine o'clock, after going to bed at daybreak. He must have had five or six hours of sleep after his vigil. On another occasion St. Gregory slept till eight o'clock.—*De Mir. St. Martini*, lib. i. cap. xxxiii. col. 1030.

rung to invite others to assemble.¹ At other times, and when there was no church near at hand, the priest said matins in his room.² After matins he went to sleep again. If it were a Mass day, he said Mass at nine o'clock.

In the Cathedral of Tours, Terce and Sext were instituted by Bishop Injuriosus, about A.D. 530, and the custom was continued in the time of St. Gregory, A.D. 580: from this being especially mentioned, it would not seem to have been general for these offices to be said in that century.³

Then followed the prandium, the first heavy meal of the day. After this, again followed a period of sleep. Thus a wife, who had been sequestered from her husband on his elevation to the episcopate, became indignant at not being able to see him, and forced her way in to see if another had not been usurping her place. She found the bishop asleep in his bed-chamber in the afternoon, with a snow white lamb on his breast to betoken his purity of heart.⁴

After this followed sometimes Vespers, and always the *cæna*, or evening meal: this latter was sometimes protracted until after dark.

This is the life of a priest in the sixth century, so far as can be traced from the writings of St. Gregory of Tours. If priests lay in bed until nine in the morning, they would go straight from bed to the altar; but laymen lived more busy lives, and there is no reason to suppose that they remained without any food at all until so late an hour.

Indeed, we find that it was usual to take a few mouthfuls of food at the time of rising, to stay the cravings of nature until the time for the first heavy meal of the day.⁵

¹ *Historia Francorum*, lib. iii. cap. xv. Parisiis, 1561, p. 136; Parisiis, 1699, col. 121: 'Signum ad matutinas motum est, erat enim dies Dominica.'

² *De Glorîâ Confessorum*, cap. xxxi. Parisiis, 1699, col. 919.

³ *Historia Francorum*, lib. x. cap. xxxi. § 15, Parisiis, 1561, p. 634; Parisiis, 1699, col. 534.

⁴ *De Glorîâ Confessorum*, cap. lxxviii. Parisiis, 1699, col. 959.

⁵ St. Gregory of Tours, *De Glorîâ Confessorum*, cap. xxxi. Parisiis, 1699, col. 919.

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Parisii, 1699, col. 959.

rum, cap. xxxi. Parisii, 1699,

As has been seen, this refection was even spoken of as 'a continuation of the fast,' because so small a bite of bread reckoned as nothing: and nothing has been adduced to show that it was regarded by the Christians as so breaking the fast as to prevent Communion.

In the times and places here spoken of, that is, in the first four centuries, and in southern climes, the main business of the day was over before the first heavy meal, the prandium of the Romans, and the *ἀπαισιον* of the Greeks. St. Chrysostom tells us that the law courts sat not noon or evening, because the full meals made them unfit to attend to business.¹ At Athens they certainly began early in the morning in the time of Aristophanes, who introduces a chorus of old men going to the assembly before it was light enough for them to see their way. They threaten to box the ears of the boy with the lantern; he therefore puts out the light, and they are left like moorhens in the mud.² Our law courts commence some five or six hours later; and this may be taken as a fair sample of the great change in hours between the early ages of Christianity and our own in England. The law courts commence about ten o'clock, and Parliament sits in the afternoon (in parliamentary language; morning) and evening, if not night. A member of Parliament during session commonly goes to bed, for his night's rest, about the time when in ancient days a man was rising refreshed with his night's sleep for his day's work.

This shows the change of hours to be very considerable. If, then, in our day few persons would call nine o'clock an early hour, how much less could it be so called in the fourth century? It might just as well be argued in our own day that mid-day was so early an hour for the celebration that it might be presumed that none had taken any food previously.

¹ *Ad populum Antiochenum*, Hom. ix. § 1, Parisii, tom. ii. p. 98 B.

² *Aristophanis Vespe*, 254; cf. *Acharnenses*, 17.

This change of hours may be for the worse. The invention of gas and the discovery of cheap mineral oils have turned night into day, and the natural time for rest is often turned to a time of work, and *vice versa*, and this unnatural strain on the body cannot be wholesome; but there is no question of the fact, and it must be taken into account in all attempts to interpret the ancient canons in an equitable manner. 'To speak disparagingly' of a mid-day celebration now is the same as speaking disparagingly of a celebration at nine o'clock in the early Church; yet that was the general hour of Communion then. At that time it was previous to the first heavy meal of the day, which answers to our luncheon—so is a mid-day celebration now with us; and there is nothing to show that St. Augustine would not have regarded a man fasting sufficiently for reverent Communion if he had taken the usual light English breakfast some hours previous to the hour of celebration.

It is indeed well that men should exercise self-denial or hardness in rising early, to show reverence for Him Whom they are about to receive, if they are able to bear it; but this cannot justify any in 'speaking disparagingly' of mid-day celebrations, still less in saying that to communicate after food taken since midnight is an unworthy reception, or even a mortal sin! In no sense was nine o'clock early in St. Chrysostom's days; there can therefore be no argument drawn from the time of celebration to show that food had not been taken since the previous midnight before the act of Communion.

But if there has been a change of hours, and if this be thought to be for the worse, there has been a more decided change in the habits of men at table, and this for the better. In ancient days there seem to have been two meals a day, or what they regarded as meals; for the small portion of food taken in the early morning, like the foreign cup of coffee at rising, was scarcely looked upon as a meal: it was more what Athenæus calls it, 'a continuance of fasting.'

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a continuance of fasting.'

The two regular meals of the day, which would answer to our modern luncheon and dinner, were not only full meals but heavy meals. There is abundant evidence on this head; but examples will be chosen from the Christian fathers rather than others, because it is with the habits of Christians that we have now to deal.

When Christianity began to leaven the world, sensuality was rampant. Philosophy had attempted something; but what was a cold, lifeless, unsympathetic Philosophy? That could not hope to effect a change in the habits of all men. Temperance Societies would have no chance at all were it not for Christianity. Philosophy was for the cold, selfish, intellectual, exclusive few. Philosophy chiefly lived upon its exclusiveness; it hugged itself on its infinite superiority to its neighbours, the ignorant masses, on whom it looked with contempt, and never attempted their improvement. Sensuality reigned triumphant. Indeed, a perusal of the present code of Canons of the Orthodox Church of the East, the accumulation of the necessary rules of past ages, would show how shocking was the state of heathenism with which the Church of Christ had to grapple. At present we are only concerned with the matter of food, and there is ample proof that in the fourth century Fasting Communion was very necessary to ensure outward reverence at the least.

It has been already seen that when the Empire became Christian, and many professed Christianity because it was fashionable to do so, there was a flood of demoralization poured over the Church. St. Augustine had to warn his catechumens specially against being scandalized by the evil lives of professing Christians.¹ It is, therefore, in the end of the fourth century that we should look for the commencement of the rule of Fasting Communion, and there we first

¹ *De Catechizandis Rudibus*, cap. vii. § 11; *Opera*, Parisiis, 1685, tom. vi. col. 270.

find it formulated. In East and West we can trace the necessity of it, in the account given in East and West of the prevalent gluttony and drunkenness.

To begin from the East. The Homilies of St. Chrysostom are full of such evidence, for they contain constant and continual reference to the habits of the day. He had the greatest flow of speech of any preacher of his time, and was gifted with the most remarkable power of language. This enabled him at once to turn to account anything that happened before his eyes; and he seized every opportunity for reproof, for praise, or exhortation, as the case might be, and enforced each with rich abundance of oratory. The result is, that we have materials in his Homilies for a good sketch of the manners and customs of the Christians of his day, and one passage from his writings will receive illustration or correction from many others.

The Homilies on the Statues, as they are called, help us to the understanding of much of the dispositions and habits of the men of Antioch in the fourth century. Irritated by the attempt to levy new taxes, the excitable people rebelled and abused the Emperor, and dragged about with every token of ignominious insult the statues of the imperial family. Then came the reaction, and the mob cowered down in fear of the imperial vengeance. Just at this time came the commencement of Lent, and the priest John (as St. Chrysostom was then) seized the opportunity, and called on the people to fast and repent in reality, to obtain favour with God that temporal judgments might be averted. At first the effect was wonderful: the churches were thronged, and men seemed to be in earnest. But too soon they wearied of this excess of devotion and fasting; and moreover they began to think that they would not be punished much, for had not their aged bishop gone to plead their cause with the Emperor? and had not the messengers despatched to tell the Emperor been most providentially delayed by unusual stress of weather? So the congregations became

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thinner, and after the first week of Lent, when the five days of fasting had been broken by the two days, Saturday and Sunday (which were feast days in the East even during Lent), there were many who gave up fasting any longer and took the *ariston*¹ as usual.

Hereupon St. Chrysostom with great wisdom did not so much blame them for taking the *ariston*, and so dishonouring the fast, as for not coming to church afterwards. No doubt, he said, it was bad enough to eat the *ariston*, but it made it far worse not to come to church; for if they had the thought of coming to church before their eyes, they would not be so likely to eat to excess. The commencement of the passage is given in the translation of Hutchinson,² because the vigour of the sixteenth century English well renders the strong language of St. Chrysostom.

If thou determine with thyself to come otherwhiles to the Communion after thou hast eat and drunk, by this means thou shalt learn to be modest and sober in thy behaviour, thou shalt never offend in drunkenness nor defile thyself in gluttony; but remembering God's Table, thou wilt take meat and drink with moderation, lest coming to the church, if thou smell of wine or belch inordinately through the fulness of your stomach, thou be a laughing-stock to all that see thee in that taking.³

The preacher next goes on to say that he wishes those who were present to report what he had said to those whom they had left at home. After saying that in the matter of the fast they had perchance a valid excuse, viz. bodily infirmity, still this could not hold with respect to hearing sermons, he goes on to say that the law courts did not sit

¹ The Greek *ariston* and the Latin *prandium* were the names of the forenoon meal which answered to our 'luncheon,' but the word is left untranslated that it may be known that word is used in the original. The omission of the *ariston* would make a day a fast; these men, therefore, broke the ecclesiastical fast by taking the *ariston*, and thereupon were ashamed to come to church.

² The Works of Roger Hutchinson, Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, afterwards of Eton College. Parker Society Edition, 1842, p. 223.

³ *Ad Populum Antiochenum*, Hom. ix. § 1, Parisiis, tom. ii. p. 97 E.

noon nor evening, because then men would be sleepy or unfit for thought because they would have eaten to excess.¹

For that hearer would be unsuitable, not who has eaten and drunk, but who does not attend to what is said, who yawns and is inattentive, who has his *body* there indeed, but his mind wandering elsewhere—this man, though fasting, is good for nothing as a hearer. He, however, who is wide awake and sober, and keeps his attention, though he have eaten and drunken, would be our most suitable hearer of all. For in the law courts and council chambers outside this rule obtained, as might be expected, for they do not know self-restraint. Wherefore they eat not for nourishment, but even to bursting, for they drink often beyond excess. Therefore, rendering themselves unfit for the administration of their affairs, they shut up both law courts and council chambers evening and afternoon. But let nothing of this kind be here, but let him that has eaten be a match for him that is fasting in sobriety of soul. For he eats not, nor drinks so as to burst his belly nor to cloud his understanding, but to repair his enfeebled body.

This passage clearly shows that the ariston or first regular meal of the day was ordinarily so full a meal as to make a man obviously unfit for his business, still more for public worship. It also shows that the taking the meal even in Lent suggested the probability that a man would not be fit for public worship soon after.

But perhaps a still more remarkable passage occurs in the second homily about Hannah. The preacher asks how it was that Eli thought her drunken. We should probably answer that she was evidently under the influence of strong excitement, and the passionate movement of her lips, and it may be the excited action of her arms, suggested this as the most natural cause at a time when the degeneracy of the priests had most probably led to much evil life among the people. But St. Chrysostom has in view the opportunity of rebuking his own people, so he says that Eli thought Hannah drunk because it was mid-day soon after the first

¹ *Ad Populum Antiochenum*, Hom. ix. § 1, Parisiis, tom. ii. p. 98 B.

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heavy meal, clearly and distinctly intimating that such
would have been the natural inference.

But¹ why, prithee, did the priest even suspect this? Was it
because he saw her laughing, or dancing, or staggering, or tumbling
down? Was it because he heard her uttering shameful or unbe-
coming language? No. Whence, then, had he this suspicion?
Not rashly, not by accident did he think this, but from the time
of day; for it was mid-day when she made her prayer. How is
this clear? From the words that go before. *For Hannah rose
up* (it says) *after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk,
and stood before the Lord.* Do you see? The time that all make
a time of relaxation she made a time of prayer; and after her meal
she hastened to supplication, and loosed the fountain of her tears,
and maintained her understanding sober and temperate; and after
her meal she prayed so earnestly that she received a gift beyond
nature, and lost her barrenness, and set straight her infirm nature.²

Then follows an earnest application of this example.
But the teaching of the passage is that it would be natural
in St. Chrysostom's day to suppose that a woman after the
first heavy meal of the day would be entirely unfitted for
devotion by having exceeded in meat and drink. There
had been much the same application in the first homily
about Hannah.³

She rose up after they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh and
stood before the Lord. It is not said without reason 'after they
had eaten and drunk,' but that you may learn that the time which
others make a time of recreation and ease, this she made a time
of prayer and tears by her excessive abstinence and watching.

Nor are these passages at all solitary in St. Chrysostom,
as indeed those must know who are at all conversant with

¹ *Sermo de Anna*, ii. § 5, Parisiis, *Opera*, tom. iv. p. 719 B.

² Just before St. Chrysostom had said, 'And so, whether you have eaten
or drunk too much, when you rise up, do not even then give over the habit [of
saying grace]; yea, though we can scarce hold up our head, though we be
staggering and tumbling, let us even so pray and not give up the habit: for,
if on one day you shall have prayed in this fashion, you will on the next correct
the shame that occurred the day before.'

³ *Sermo de Anna*, i. § 5, tom. iv. p. 707 B.

his writings ; but for such as are not familiar with them, one more passage is given, which is peculiar, as implying that grace after meat would atone for gluttony at the meal. He says if St. Paul and Silas sang psalms and hymns in prison, how much more should we sing who are free.¹

Much more should we, who are well off and enjoy freely the good things of God, send up to Him hymns of thanksgiving, so that if any unseemly thing have happened to our souls from drunkenness or gluttony, on the entrance of psalmody all those unseemly and wicked results may lightly depart. And just as many rich persons, filling a sponge with balsam, wipe down their tables, so that, if any mess have happened from the food,² this being drawn over the table makes it clean ; so, indeed, let us do, filling our mouth with spiritual melody, so that if there be any defilement in the soul from gluttony we may wipe it off with this melody ; and let us stand up and say together—*Thou hast made me glad, O Lord, through Thy works, and I will rejoice in giving praise for the operations of Thy hands.*

Here, then, remark the peculiar interpretation of this verse of the psalm. St. Chrysostom interprets it as if it applied to the physical exhilaration of the animal spirits by food, equally with the spiritual exultation of the righteous in the intellectual appreciation of the working of Providence. Nor can we quite eliminate from the context the idea that, if a man has overeaten himself, the thanksgiving for the physical sense of satisfaction will remove suspicion of fault. It is quite true that health of body and vigour of mind commonly go together, and that sufficiency of good food is a blessing for which we ought to be most thankful. But few would have understood this particular text in this way, had not the pleasures of eating been extremely appreciated at the time. From the manner of its introduction, we may suppose that it was the text then in common use as grace after meat, just as now we use (as has been done in the West for many centuries), 'All Thy works praise Thee, O

¹ *Expositio in Psalmum xli.* § 2, Parisiis, tom. v. p. 132 D.

² Isaiah xxviii. 7, 8.

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Lord, and Thy saints give thanks unto Thee.' It would
have never occurred to any one now-a-days to use as grace
after meat, 'Thou hast made me glad through Thy
works.'

These passages may suffice¹ to show from St. Chryso-
stom that eating to excess was the rule in his day, and this
to such an extent, that he endeavoured not so much to pre-
vent it altogether, as to lessen and lighten it by trying to
lead his people to think of higher things at the time of
their meals.

Nor is St. Chrysostom alone in this witness. Perhaps
in his voluminous works and popular sermons he enters
more into the details of daily life than the other Fathers,
but he is not alone in his witness to this luxurious habit of
feeding to excess. The great St. Basil often alludes to it
in one way or another. Persuading men² to fasting he
cries out—

Tell me, you are not able to fast? Pray, are you not able to
gorge yourself all your life, and wear out your body with the load
of what you eat?

But it may be said that St. Basil was an ascetic, and
used strong language about those who indulged more than
he would have ascetics indulge. It may perhaps be also
said that the revoltingly profane behaviour in church
on Easter Day which he inveighs against³ was the reaction
from the severity of the Lenten fast; and that St.
Ambrose,⁴ in using similar language, is only translating

¹ Other passages may be found in *Hom. in Martyres*, tom. ii. p. 668 D :
'After this spiritual theatre is dismissed, let us keep alive the flame and go
home with the same devotion, not suffering ourselves in taverns and brothels,
and drunkenness and junketings. You have turned night into day with these
holy vigils, do not turn day into night by drunkenness and excess and loose
songs. . . . Do you wish to enjoy luxury? enjoy it at home, that if drunken-
ness supervene, there may be many to take care of you.' See also *Hom. in*
Kalendas, tom. i. p. 702 A; *Hom. X. in Gen.* cap. i. tom. iv. p. 72.

² *Hom. I. de Jejunio*, § 4, ed. Gaume, tom. ii. p. 4.

³ *Homilia in Ebriosos*, *Hom.* xiv.; *O'era*, ed. Gaume, tom. ii. p. 171.

⁴ *De Elia et Jejunio*, cap. xviii. §§ 66, 67, &c.

St. Basil. But this will not account for the following passage from St. Clement of Alexandria.¹ This saint describes as not uncommon a sight which cannot easily be seen now-a-days.

You may see such people, liker swine or dogs for gluttony than men, in such a hurry to feed themselves full that both jaws are stuffed out at once, the veins about the face raised, and besides, the perspiration running all over them as they are tightened with their insatiable greed, and panting with their excess.

This may suffice for the East. In the West we know most about Africa; and here there is evidence that there was little restraint at times in eating and drinking. Passing by Tertullian, whose Montanist proclivities may be held to have caused exaggeration of the failings of his time in this respect, we find that St. Cyprian had a distinct revelation on this very subject. In his retirement from the Decian persecution, he wrote to his clergy at Carthage that by revelation he had special knowledge that the persecution would not last long. He then goes on to say that the revelation at the same time admonished,²

that we be sparing in diet and sober in drink, lest, that is, worldly allurements should enervate a breast lately elevated with heavenly vigour; or lest the mind, burdened by too excessive fastings, should be less wakeful for the utterance of prayer.

It can scarce be supposed either that a revelation on this head would have been vouchsafed, or that the saint would have sent special word of it to his clergy at Carthage, unless excessive eating had been the habit of the Christians in his diocese.

But, as we have already seen, in St. Augustine's day excess in eating and drinking was indeed the rule in Africa. This formed one of the points in which the Donatists

¹ *Pedagogus*, lib. ii. cap. i.; Clark's *Anto-Nicene Library*, vol. i. p. 194. Thirteen pages are devoted to a chapter on eating, and ten are upon drinking.

² Ep. vii. *Ad Clerum de precando Deo*; *Opera*, Parisiis, 1726, p. 15.

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Opera, Parisiis, 1726, p. 15.

attacked the Catholics; and St. Augustine set himself¹
most earnestly to reform their license in this respect.

Feastings and drunkenness are reckoned to be so lawful that
they are celebrated even in honour of the most blessed martyrs,
not only on solemn days (which, indeed, none would not regard
as lamentable if he looked not on this with carnal eyes), but even
every day. . . . But let us tolerate this in luxury and waste of home,
and of those feasts which are held within private houses, and let
us receive with them the Body of Christ, with whom we are for-
bidden even to eat bread; only let so great a shame be kept away
from the sepulchres of the bodies of the saints, only from the
places of the Sacraments, from the houses of prayer.

Similarly the African writer who passes under the name
of St. Cyprian,² but who probably is somewhere about the
time of St. Augustine, bears the same witness:—

Drunkenness is so common in our Africa, that men hardly
hold it as a crime. Do we not see a Christian compelled to
advance to drunkenness by a Christian at the memorials of the
martyrs?

We cannot therefore wonder that it was in Africa first
that we read of fasting celebration being insisted on as a
rule. But Africa was not singular in the West, for we find
Sulpicius Severus rallying the Gauls on their voracity; and
the rule given by St. Jerome to Eustochium³ (who was, be
it remembered, not only a religious Christian woman, but
a professed and consecrated virgin of high social position
as well) would hardly be regarded as necessary now.

Let your meals be moderate and never eat to repletion. For
there are many women who, though they are sober from wine, are
drunk from the copiousness of food. When you rise from prayer
at night, let not incomplete digestion cause eructation, but empti-
ness. Fast daily, and take a refecton which shuns satiety.

¹ Epist. xxii. (al. 64), § 3, Parisiis, 1688, tom. ii. col. 28.

² *De Duplici Martyrio*, § 25; *Cypriani Opera*, Parisiis, 1726, Appendix,
p. cclxvi.

³ Ep. xxii. *Opera*, Verone, 1734, tom. i. col. 99.

But was not all this fully known before to our dear Lord? Have we not been at times startled with such references in our Lord's discourses to His own chosen disciples? 'Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you un-awares.'¹ These words, as we find by comparing the Synoptic Gospels, were spoken not to the multitude at large, but to the chosen twelve, as the Lord sat on the Mount of Olives, lingering still in view of Jerusalem and the Temple. The warning was addressed not to the people at large, not to the disciples in general, but to the chosen twelve. Must we not think that the warning was addressed through them to such cases as the Fathers at the commencement of the fifth century speak of?

In prospect, then, of such habits, it would be natural that the Fathers of the Church in council would try to prevent irregularities and profanity, at all events externally, at the highest and most glorious worship of the Church. If, then, it was thought probable that men, if they ate at all, would eat to satiety or excess, it would be well that they should come to church before the first heavy meal of the day, or (in the language of ecclesiastical usage) fasting, that is to say, amongst the Greeks before they had taken the *ariston*, with the Latins before the *prandium*. It was necessary, to ensure outward decorum, that men should come to Communion fasting.

But it may be said that if men believed, as we know they did, it was impossible that infirmity of nature should lead them into such terrible profanity as to press forward

¹ St. Luke xxi. 34, compared with St. Matthew xxiv. 3, St. Mark xiii. 3. The words 'well drunk,' in the speech of the Architrictinus (St. John ii. 10), point to the same. In ages before the 'making merry' of Joseph and his brethren have in Hebrew and Greek a distinct reference to satiety if not excess (Gen. xliii. 34). To be fed *to the full*, i.e. with sense of repletion even to loathing, is the desire of the carnal Israelites (Exodus xvi. 3, Numbers xi. 19, 20). Nor is the Apocrypha without such reference, Ecclus. xxxi. 21, &c.

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to Communion when disordered by excess of food. Can it be thought that when St. Chrysostom strains human language to express extreme reverence for the mystery of the Altar, men would desecrate the service by unseemly conduct?

It is indeed hard to think so; because, as we look back upon primitive antiquity, when love was warm and fresh and eager, there is apt to arise a halo of romance which makes us humbly to conceive that we are not only no better but much worse than our fathers. But it would almost seem as if the First Epistle to the Corinthians was written that there might be dis. ouraged any ideal conception of the primitive Apostolic Church. Even then there was irreverence at Communion from the effects of excess in food; and we find some hints of the same further on in history. Thus St. Chrysostom gives the irreverence from satiety, especially on Maundy Thursday, as a reason why Lent was instituted before Easter to ensure some sort of preparation before Communion.

Why do we fast these forty days? In ancient days many used to approach the mysteries carelessly and as it might happen, and especially at this time when Christ instituted them.¹

Thus St. Chrysostom would seem to imply that irreverence caused by the Maundy was one reason for the institution of the fast. Walafrid Strabo (A.D. 850) says distinctly that it was necessary that the celebration should be before the prandium, since that often degenerated into excess.²

Also a great reason of necessity demands this [fasting], since evidently it is credible that men taking the prandium before Communion (a bad habit, always having a tendency to get worse)

¹ *Contra Judæos*, iii. § 4; *Opera*, Parisiis, tom. i. p. 611 c.

² *De Rebus Ecclesiasticis*, cap. xix. apud Hittorpium; *De Catholica Ecclesiæ Divinis Officiis*, Romæ, 1591, p. 343. It is one of the reasons given by St. Thomas: 'Tertio propter periculum vomitus et ebrietatis, quæ quandoque contingunt ex hoc quod homines inordinate cibis utuntur.'—*Summa*, p. iii. questio lxxx. art. 8, Venetiis, 1757, tom. v. p. 546.

would sometimes slip on from slight refectations even to excess of drunkenness.

St. Gregory of Tours, too, tells a terrible story of a priest consecrating even in the morning when in a state of drunkenness after a night's drinking.¹ It is therefore no wonder that we find such canons as that of Mácon, that 'no presbyter stuffed with food or drunken with wine is to presume to handle the sacrifices or Masses on private or festival days.'

In our own country there was good ground for similar canons. Constantly do we find canons against priests drinking to excess; there was good reason then in the tenth century for the following canon, which is ascribed by Johnson to the year A.D. 994 :—

Further, we command all mass priests, who are willing to sing Mass before High Mass either on Sundays or other mass days, that they do it secretly, so as that they may draw no part of the people from High Mass; for it is a very evil custom, which some men practise both on Sundays and other mass days, that they will hear Mass early in the morning, and then presently all the day after serve their own belly, not God, by drunkenness and junketing.

¹ 'So Epachius the priest, when he rashly presumed to do what he was unworthy to do, was hurled to the ground by the Divine judgment. This man, when he had sought the church to celebrate the vigil of Christmas, kept going out of the Temple of God every hour, and kept drinking in his own house licentious cups with foaming bowls, so that many affirmed that they saw him drinking in that night after cock-crow. But since he was of a family of senatorial rank, and no one in that town of Riour spoken of before was reckoned of higher rank in the estimation of the world, he was sought out to celebrate the solemnity of the Mass. Nor did the wretched man, sodden with wine as he was, hesitate to press on eagerly to that which no man, though fasting, can without fear undertake with trembling conscience. But when the sacred words were finished, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Body was broken, he himself received and distributed to others to eat; but he at once fell to the ground, uttering a cry like a horse's neigh; and casting from his mouth foam with the very particle of the Sacred Mystery which he had been unable to masticate, he is borne away from the church by his own people. Nor from that day was he without the infirmity of epilepsy, but throughout the lunar periods, with increase and decrease, this always lasted, because the wretched man did not at all abstain from taking too much wine.'—*De Glorid Martyrum*, lib. i. cap. lxxxvii.; *Opera*, Parisiis, 1699, col. 819.

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y presumed to do what he was y the Divine judgment. This ate the vigil of Christmas, kept and kept drinking in his own at many affirmed that they saw But since he was of a family of Riour spoken of before was the world, he was sought out to the wretched man, sodden with to that which no man, though mbling conscience. But when amment of the Lord's Body was o others to eat; but he at once eigh; and casting from his mouth stery which he had been unable a by his own people. Nor from epsy, but throughout the lunar ys lasted, because the wretched ch wine.'—*De Gloria Martyrum*, 819.

Now we command that *no man taste any meat* till the service of the High Mass be finished; and that all women, as well as men, assemble themselves to High Mass, and the *preaching of God's Word*.¹

Here, then, it is not only about Communion, but about attending at service and hearing the sermon. The tendency of men was such that when they took food they gorged themselves, hence they were forbidden to touch food until they had heard High Mass *and the sermon*. It is quite manifest from all testimony that when such canons were passed there was sufficient reason for them; but it does not follow that such canons must consequently bind always and at all times. If so, the rigorists must certainly attend mid-day celebration and hear the sermon before they venture to touch food! No, we must remember that when Fasting Communion was the custom, excess in eating was the rule and not the exception, and in order to secure reverence at Communion, it was necessary that the rule should be that men should come fasting.² The necessity of this is seen from the various rules that men should be fasting not only at Communion but at sermon time; and not only so, but also at Baptism, Confirmation, and Ordination, whether as

¹ *A Collection of the Laws and Canons of the Church of England*, by John Johnson, M.A. Oxford, 1850, vol. i. p. 478. This is much the same as the nineteenth Canon of Auxerre (A.D. 578), which forbids priest, deacon, or subdeacon to remain in church while Mass is being said, if he have touched meat or drink.—Bruns, *Canones*, tom. ii. p. 239.

² This is always one reason, if not the only one, given in ancient days for the introduction of the custom of Fasting Communion. Thus in a MS. Book of Homilies in the British Museum (Harleian MSS. 2247, fo. 86) the rule is ascribed to the prevalence of excess and drunkenness, and ends, 'So holy Chirch hath turned that foule use to gretter honeste and holynes, that ys to sey, to sey Masse fasting, and men and women to receyve ge Sacrament fasting but if grete nede and sikenes cause it.' In a MS. in my possession of the thirteenth century (dated A.D. 1268), consisting of skeleton sermons on the Blessed Sacrament by the preaching friars at Cologne, there are a few notes on the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer, showing how these pray against the seven deadly sins, and pray for the seven beatitudes. The petition 'lead us not into temptation' is explained as a prayer against gluttony, 'ne vincamur temptatione cibi vel potus superflui.' This would scarcely have occurred to an ordinary English Christian in our day.

bishop, priest, catechumen, or candidate, all were to be fasting. Nay, even more than this, in order to prevent false swearing and to ensure accuracy in testimony, it was obliged to be laid down as a law that men were to be fasting when they gave testimony upon oath.¹ We are therefore not to be surprised that the same gross habits necessitated a rule² that none should eat or drink soon after Communion, not only lest excess should dishonour their service, but even to prevent much worse irreverence. It is distressing to read of penances being apportioned to bishops, priests, deacons, clerks, monks, and laymen for profanity even to vomiting through drunkenness or overeating.³ But these penances reveal the necessity of the rule of Fasting Communion; and the varying severity of penance teaches us that the bishops were of the same opinion as St. Chrysostom, that temperance *after* Communion was even more important than before. For the penance for dishonouring the Sacrament by excess after Communion is consider-

¹ Thus one of the canons of Isaac, Bishop of Langres (cir. A.D. 750) is as follows: 'cap. ii. *De Perjuriis cavendis*. Præcipimus ut perjuriam caveantur, nec admittantur testes ad juramentum antequam discutiantur. Et si aliter discuti non possint, separentur ab invicem et singulariter inquirentur. Et non licet soli accusatori testes eligere absente suo causatore. Et omnino nullus nisi jejunus ad juramentum vel ad testimonium admittitur.'—Migne, *Patrologie Coursus Completus*, tom. cxxiv. col. 1101.

² See p. 179 et seq.

³ These are generally to be found in English Missals amongst the *Cautela*. The Sarum is as follows: 'Si quis aliquo casu *gula* Eucharistiam evomuerit vomitus ille debet incinerari, et cineres juxta altare debent recondi. Et si fuerit clericus, monachus, presbyter, vel diaconus, quadraginta diebus poeniteat, episcopus septuaginta, laicus triginta. Si vero ex infirmitate vomuerit quinque diebus poeniteat.' (Maskell, *Ancient Liturgy of Church of England*, 1846, p. 175.) That in the Hereford is: 'Si quis per *ebrietatem vel voracitatem* Eucharistiam evomuerit quadraginta diebus poeniteat. Clerici vel monachi, diaconi vel presbyteri, septuaginta diebus: episcopus nonaginta diebus. Si per infirmitatem evomuerit septem diebus poeniteat.' (*Missale ad usum Herefordensis Ecclesie*, 1874, p. xxxv.) A rigorist priest acknowledged that his daily celebration before taking any food always made him very sick; but he never did penance. 'Si quis patitur continuum vomitum, tutius est quod non detur ei Eucharistia, quia sufficit ei fides et bona voluntas,' is the rule of Hereford.

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ably heavier than the penance for communicating after food.¹

The fact, then, that the same rule held for hearing sermons, Baptism, Confirmation, Communion, Ordination, and taking oaths in a court of law, shows that there was no such idea contemplated, as some would insist on now, that the fast before Communion was 'a symbolic fast beginning with a symbolic day.' I do not pretend to know quite what this means, but as the reverence sought in making the Communion the first food received in 'a symbolic day' cannot apply to Baptism, nor to hearing sermons, nor to Confirmation, nor to Ordination, nor to giving testimony on oath, and as there was the same rule for all, we can scarcely suppose that there was originally an exceptional symbolism for one. If this symbolism existed, it was introduced as a pleasing reason to persuade men to accept a rule which gross habits had rendered necessary.

It is indeed a matter for the deepest thankfulness that Christianity has with us so leavened society that drunkenness and excess have decreased, at all events amongst persons who are found as communicants at God's Altar. It cannot be said that there is the same reason for a rule of Fasting Communion now in England that there was nine hundred or fifteen hundred years ago. The introduction of tea and such like beverages has wrought a wholesome change for the better. While, therefore, there exists the same reason for the ecclesiastical fast, the same reason for humiliation, mortification, and purification of the soul, there is not the same reason for the technical rule of a fast from midnight next preceding the act of Communion.

This may not perhaps be true of the mining and some manufacturing populations; but we must remember that

¹ 'Whosoever shall eat before he goes to Housel, and after that partake of the Housel, let him fast seven days.' (Bacon, *Anglo-Saxon Witness*, p. 28.) The other penances are from thirty to ninety days.

Christianity has reached most of these in a spasmodic and hysterical form, which, if anything, would promote and stimulate excitement and desire for excitement rather than the steady sobriety of a godly life.

But it is not only in connection with the habits at table that we seem to trace a change for the better; for, looking into the manners generally as shown in the homilies of St. Chrysostom, we may find that men were then so undisciplined that they needed some sharp curb to ensure external reverence.

On this head of the emendation of manners the opinion expressed by the Greek Archbishop Alexander of Syra and Tenos, after his visit to England in 1870, is well worthy of record. He said that he thought that the English carried their Christianity into their daily life more than any other nation with which he was acquainted. It is consoling perhaps to hear this. To those who are watching and labouring for their Master, it would oftentimes seem as if there never could have been a time of such laxity and such backsliding as that in which their lot was cast. It is ever the cry of a man disheartened in his work for God, 'We are no better but even worse than our fathers.' It is therefore encouraging and helpful to hear a cheering opinion expressed by a foreigner, whose merits have occasioned his being raised in his own country to a high position of authority and responsibility in the Church of God.

Indeed, if we look back into history, we shall find grounds for thanking God and taking courage, for not only shall we find that there has been a great change for the better wrought by Christian teaching among us in the matter of eating and drinking, but there has been also a wholesome change of manners. If St. Chrysostom were alive in our day and were present in our churches, he would marvel at the reverent demeanour of the worshippers: for in his homilies he speaks over and over again of the irreverence in his congregations.

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It is too true that in some particulars there does not seem very much improvement, and the reproof of St. Chrysostom might well be read out amongst ourselves. Does he reprove with great severity his congregation for neglecting worship and discipline on Good Friday and Easter Eve, for the indecent enjoyment of attendance at the Circensian Shows? We have been shocked at the murder of the chief of a Christian State in a theatre on Good Friday ; nay, nearer home, by gaieties, on that most sacred day. In many things, however, there has been a great change for the better.

The applause in church during the sermon is not perhaps so much to be condemned if kept within moderate bounds ; and though sometimes St. Chrysostom bids his people rather show their approbation of his sermons by doing what he bids them, than by applauding loudly and then doing what he condemns, yet at times of great excitement he seems to have thanked them for their applause, which was a great encouragement to him.¹ This would seem strange to us now. It is somewhat unpleasant to hear some popular preachers make a periodic pause for the congregation to cough and use their handkerchiefs, which to a stranger sounds like applause. But there is no especial harin in this. A well-known priest of English birth, who had received orders in America, used to say that, though he was pleased with the silent attention of his congregation in England, he much missed the murmurs of approval or assent he had been accustomed to in the New World. But we are well escaped from the interruption and mockings of heretics with which, for example, the arguments of St. Basil were sometimes received.²

How painful is it to read of the tumults which too often

¹ *Sermo antequam iret in Exilium*, § 4, Parisiis, tom. iii. p. 418 A. There clearly was a great burst of applause, which makes the preacher cry out, ' Really this is seemly and great for you ; this is a bright token of peace ; this is the panegyric of the people. It is my crown and your fruit.'

² St. Basil, *Hom. contra Sabellianos*, tom. ii. p. 269 A, 270 B, ed. Gaume.

accompanied the work of choosing a bishop! Not to mention the well-known choice of St. Ambrose at Milan, the contest for the See of Rome in the middle of the fourth century will more than suffice for our purpose. The name of Pope Damasus is generally connected with St. Jerome, and his renowned revision of the Latin Version now universally received as the Vulgate. At Rome too he is well known by the especially beautiful form of character in which the inscriptions of his time are engraved in stone. But he did not mount the throne of the See without violence and even bloodshed.¹ One day when his opponent, Ursinus, was actually being consecrated in the Julian Basilica, Damasus, at the head of an unruly and tumultuous mob, rushed in and stopped the consecration. This sort of profanity constantly marked the quasi-canvass of the two candidates, until, after some hundred and thirty had been killed in church on one occasion, the ladies' candidate, Damasus, succeeded to the Episcopal throne.

Many of our people are very ignorant and superstitious, and the clergy of England, though still as a body they are *stupor mundi* for general knowledge, might as a rule know more than they do; yet let us hope there is not much necessity amongst ourselves for the canon which denounces deposition against a bishop who consults a wizard.

Still the chief change for the better is seen in the reverent demeanour of our congregations at public worship. All other improvements culminate in this: for if it be said that in London the irreverent ones do not come to church as a rule, it may be said that these would represent the heathen population of Antioch and Constantinople who did not come to church; and the Christians and communicants would be a selection from the population then as the congregations and communicants are now in London.

In St. Chrysostom's homilies we constantly read of his

¹ Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, lib. iv. cap. xxix.; Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xxvii. cap. iii. ed. Gronovius, Lugduni Batavorum, 1693, p. 373.

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taking his hearers roundly to task for their bad behaviour in church, for laughing and talking and making such a disturbance, that some could not in the least tell what was going on. In one homily there is a passage which occupies some three or more pages folio on this very subject, a part of which is here given :¹—

In a house a man may see good order. The mistress sits on the chief seat with all shamefastness and her maidens spin quietly, and each of the domestics does what he is told. But here (in church) the disturbance is great, the confusion is great, and there is no difference from a tavern. The laughter, the noise is as great as it is in the baths, or in the agora, all crying out and bellowing.

Nor may we suppose that this was only upon one particular occasion, for it is to be found in all periods of the homilies. Thus again, when in his homilies on the Psalms the saint is speaking of the solemn march of the Israelites in silence round and round Jericho, he cannot refrain from pointing a reproof at his own people :²—

A wonderful and astonishing sight it must have been to see so many thousands of men, in battle array, marching in rank and harmony, in silence and order, as if no one were there, with that music of the trumpets arranging everything. Let them who make a tumultuous disturbance in church be ashamed; for if where the trumpets sounded there was such order, what pardon will they meet with who by their own private disturbances prevent the accurate hearing of others where God Himself is speaking?

Similarly in one of his homilies on the Epistle to the Hebrews he says :³—

The priest of God stands offering the prayer of all; and are you laughing without any reverence? . . . This is too what I say to women, who in the presence of their husbands do not dare to

¹ Hom. xxxvi. in *Ep. I. ad Corinthios*, Parisiis, tom. x. pp. 340–342.

² *Expositio in Ps. xliii.* Parisiis, tom. v. p. 148 B. Similarly he urges his hearers to keep silence in church. *Expos. in Ps. viii.* tom. v. p. 77 C. See again *In Acta*, Hom. xxiv. § 4, tom. ix. 198 D sq. *In Mat.* Hom. xxxii. tom. vii. 374.

³ In *Ep. ad Hebræos*, cap. ix. Hom. xv. Parisiis, tom. xii. p. 156 A.

do this readily; and if they do it, it is not at all times, but only at seasons of relaxation : but here they do it always. Tell me, O woman, do you cover your head and yet laugh as you sit in church?

Nor is this unseemly behaviour confined to ordinary congregations or to ordinary services, but we find language much more violent used to describe the manner in which the communicants approached the holy table: and this not once nor twice, but several times:—

Since, then, we too are about this very evening¹ to see Him that was nailed to the cross now as a Lamb slain and sacrificed, let us approach, I beseech you, with awe and much reverence and veneration. Know ye not how the angels stood at the sepulchre, though it contained not a body, the empty tomb? But notwithstanding this, since it once held the Lord's Body, they accord much honour even to the place. The angels, who are far above our nature, were present at the tomb with such awe and reverence; but do we, who are about to stand not by an empty tomb, but by the Table itself which holds the Lamb, do we approach with tumult and uproar? And what for the future will be our excuse? I speak not this without point; but since I see this evening many making a disturbance, shouting, pushing each other about, jumping, reviling, and rather procuring punishment for themselves than salvation—on this account I make my exhortation to you about these things. What are you about, O man? When the priest stands before the Table lifting up his hands to heaven, calling on the Holy Spirit to be present and to touch the offerings, there is much quiet, there is much silence. When the Holy Spirit gives His grace, when He has descended, when He has touched the offerings, when thou seest the Sheep slain and ready, *then* dost thou bring in tumult, *then* disturbance, *then* contention, *then* revilings. And how wilt thou be able to enjoy this Sacrifice, when you approach this Table with such a disturbance? Does it not suffice that we approach it with our sins, but also do we not suffer the very moment of approach to pass without trespasses? For when we are contending, when we are making a disturbance, when we are snarling at each other, how shall we be without sins? Why are you in a hurry, tell me?

¹ The evening of Good Friday; as the Benedictine editors point out.

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On what account are you driven on when you see the Sheep
slain?¹

This passage is strong enough, but it might well be
supposed to represent an unusual occurrence if there were
not other passages in the same strain. A great part of
two pages is occupied with a similar exhortation in a
Christmas Day sermon:²—

When we are to approach this tremendous and divine Table
and holy mystery, do it with fear and trembling, with a clean
conscience, with fasting and prayer, not making a disturbance, not
kicking each other nor pushing your neighbours. For this is a
mark of extreme madness, and no ordinary contempt. Wherefore
it brings on those that do such things much punishment and
vengeance.

On another occasion on the Epiphany the saintly
preacher uses much the same style of reproof:³—

What, then, is this sin? This, viz. not to approach with awe,
but kicking, beating, full of anger, shouting, reviling, pushing your
neighbours, filled to the full with disturbance. I often spoke thus
and will not give over. Do you not see in the Olympic games,
when the judge of the games goes through the agora, having a
crown on his head, robed in a vestment, holding a wand in his
hand, what order there is when the herald cries that there be
silence and quiet behaviour? How, then, is it not incongruous
that when the devil holds his pomp there should be this quiet,
but when Christ calls us to Himself, there should be much
tumult? In the agora silence, in church hubbub; in the open sea
a calm, and a storm in the harbour: tell me, O man, why are you
making a disturbance?

Again, writing of the betrayal of Judas:⁴—

Let us approach the reception of these awful and tremendous
mysteries with meekness and modesty, and much reverence, not

¹ *Hom. de Cæmeterio et de Cruce*, § 3, Parisiis, tom. ii. p. 401 B.

² *In diem natalem Dni. nostri Jesu Christi*, § 7, Parisiis, tom. ii. p.

364 B.

³ *De Baptismo Christi et Epiphaniâ*, § 4, Parisiis, tom. ii. p. 374 B.

⁴ *De Proditiōe Judæ*, Hom. ii. ad finem, Parisiis, tom. ii. p. 396 B.

pushing and kicking, neither crying out with noise and shouting, but approaching with compunction and tears.

These passages show us that in St. Chrysostom's days even the external behaviour of the communicants in church was grievously lacking in reverence. In this respect there has been a wonderful improvement. If, then, in those times when the outward behaviour was so shocking there was need of carnal preparation for reception, so that man might not receive after food for fear of irreverence still worse, why should the same be necessary now when external reverence is in all probability the symptom of deepened inner devotion? When St. Chrysostom is holding up Hannah the mother of Samuel as an example of reverent behaviour and devotion after having taken the forenoon meal, he says, if she was so devout after her meal, what would she have been fasting? We may well reverse the question and say, if these men and women of St. Chrysostom's congregation were so irreverent and profane when fasting, what would they have been after their full meal in the forenoon? There may have been reason *then* for their rule of Fasting Communion, but this does not make it binding now. Perhaps some one may say that the prolonged fast was the reason of their violent eagerness at that service. But that is not the question now. Evidence has been adduced that at the time when the rule of Fasting Communion was first formulated, at the end of the fourth century, there was a prevalence of undisciplined habits at home and abroad, at table and in church. This necessitated the prohibition of the sitting of the law courts after the full meals of the day: it necessitated the rule that witnesses should be fasting when they gave evidence on oath: how much more therefore did it necessitate that men should be fasting when they approached the sacred offices of our religion? There was no exception for one more than another; for Baptism, for Confirmation, for

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Ordination, for the Blessed Sacrament, compulsory fasting became the rule; and if any difference was made in respect of the Holy Communion, it was in the custom of a fast after and not before the celebration. If, therefore, we wish to interpret the canons aright, we must take all this into consideration; and, as Keble said on this matter, we must 'learn to make candid allowance for the difference between our circumstances and those with a view to which the primitive canons were framed.'¹ In other words, while we acknowledge the necessity of the fence of fasting to preserve holy solemnities from irreverence when these canons were first framed, we must also acknowledge that with change of manners this necessity has passed away, and fasting as a guard for the truth of oaths in the law courts, or for the solemn offices of our religion, is no longer necessary in England.

¹ *Letters of Spiritual Counsel*, p. 239.

CHAPTER III.

THE INCONVENIENCY OF PRIVATE SELECTION OF
DISUSED CANONS.

IT has been seen that the officer for enforcing canons is the bishop in his diocese: upon him rests the responsibility and the jurisdiction. This, too, is seen in the interpretation given by St. Chrysostom to the passage alleged as giving authority for making canons. The Lord said, 'If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.'

In these words, if we take St. Cyprian's dictum, we shall understand the Church to mean the bishop as representative of the Church, as he should be in reality. For St. Cyprian said, 'You ought to know that the bishop is in the Church, and the Church is in the bishop;' ¹ that is, as Bishop Jeremy Taylor ² has it, 'He is in the Church as the head is part of the body, and the Church is in him as in their representative, and all their power is ministered by his hand, and their interest promoted by him.' Nor does St. Chrysostom differ from this interpretation, for of the above text he says in effect, 'Tell it to the bishop of the Church, who is to minister food and discipline to the congregation.' And herein he is followed by the Greek Fathers.

¹ Ep. lxi., Parisiis, 1726, p. 123.

² *Ductor Dubitantium*, book iii. chap. iv. rule 2, § 1; *Works*, ed. Eden, vol. x. p. 276. The Bishop quotes St. Cyprian and St. Chrysostom.

This, too, would seem the most probable interpretation ; for the Lord at once goes on to address the Apostles personally, 'Whatsoever ye shall bind ;' and in them He addresses their successors the bishops.

Hence we can understand that the sense of extreme responsibility may prevent hasty action on the part of bishops ; and we may believe that an especial grace is given them in their consecration to this end. Oftentimes, it may be, their action seems cowardly or time-serving, whereas it may arise from the deepest sense of responsibility. We can well see that the inconveniency would be intolerable, if a priest, in the vigour of his youthful zeal, were to have the power of declaring the mind of the Church on those things which lie nearest his heart. Experience teaches that when an eager zealot holds an opinion strongly, and is called on to give the grounds of his view, he will probably say that it is the teaching of the Church, which is at once an easy and a conclusive argument ; but generally, when pressed home, the asserter of this will give, as the grounds of his claiming the Church to be on his side, the views of one or two particular doctors.

This power of uttering or reviving¹ canons was never in the hands of the priests at their individual discretion ; indeed, the inconveniency would naturally be intolerable.

For no one would be quite certain whom to obey, if one priest revived one particular canon of a local council, and inflicted it on his congregation on pain of mortal sin, and another priest imposed something else on his. Confusion must be the result, and this cannot be according to the will of God. From the first, 'all the power of commanding and making ecclesiastical laws, that is, laws of religion, [has been regarded to reside] wholly in the pastors and bishops

¹ A canon which has been abrogated by disuser requires to be re-enacted to have the vigour of law ; and no individual priest can pretend to this power. 'Lex abrogata non renovatur, sed restauratur velut mortua erat et exsuscitatur, cum ejus observatio sancitur.'—Gibert, *Corpus Juris Canonici*, 1735, vol. i. p. 165.

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le 2, § 1; *Works*, ed. Eden,
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in the supreme order of ecclesiastics.¹ If priests ever had this authority granted them, let one single notice of such authority be quoted, and there may be some pretence for the modern practice of certain priests.

But it is rather to be feared that the same tendency that so often appeared of old, of priests endeavouring to usurp the powers and offices confined by custom or church-law to bishops alone, is once more showing itself. It is one of the *prava consuetudines* condemned by name in canon-law,² 'that priests should usurp authority which belongs to bishops alone.' There are other symptoms that this is springing up amongst us.

Take, for example, the whole questions of Sisterhoods. It is well known that, in consequence of grave scandals, and no doubt other reasons, the Church of England for some centuries did not recognize monastic life within her pale. But in our own times there has been a revival of this, especially in Sisterhoods. Now the ancient canons are explicit enough on this head; they declare, as Durandus has drawn from them, that all such should be under the bishop of the diocese. But more than this. Constantly do we find laid down that the Confirmation and the Consecration of Virgins are to be restricted to bishops alone.³ Thus St. Jerome writes, speaking of a man hurriedly advanced to a bishopric: '—

Yesterday a catechumen, to-day a bishop; yesterday in the amphitheatre, to-day in church; at evening in the circus, in the morning at the altar; just now a patron of actors, now a consecrator of virgins.

¹ Jeremy Taylor, *Works*, ed. Eden, vol. x. p. 276.

² Gibert, vol. i. pars ii. p. 85: 'Quâ presbyteri usurpant quæ sunt ordinis Episcopalis.'

³ 'Cette consécration ne peut être faite que par l'Evêque; et les vierges qui la reçoivent doivent être âgées de 25 ans.' (Fleury, *Institution au Droit Ecclésiastique*, partie i. ch. xxviii. *Opuscules*, 1780, tom. ii. p. 305.) See Co. Carthag. II. can. iii.: 'Ut Chrismatis confectio et puellarum consecratio a presbytero non fiant; vel reconciliare quemquam in publicâ missâ presbytero non licere, hoc omnibus placet.' See also Co. Carthag. III. can. xxxvi.

⁴ Ep. lxix. *Ad Oceanum*, § 9, *Opera*, Verona, 1734, tom. i. col. 422.

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Now, if we believe that there is a special grace given to those who solemnly dedicate themselves to a religious life, we should take good heed that the one who pretends or offers to administer this grace has indeed authority for so doing. But we find that no priest might consecrate virgins without the special delegation of his bishop.

One sisterhood in especial is content to be in perfect sympathy with the bishop of the diocese, and to accept at his hands the dedication that he is willing to give them. But how many are content to think they receive the especial grace of a sister's life at the hands of a priest? If not, what means the ring on the hand of her who is called a bride of Christ? Who placed it there? By whose authority? It will be found that a priest has intruded into the bishop's office; and the excuse made will probably be that no bishop of the Church of England would pretend to marry nuns to Christ, therefore priests must do it. But 'there is not in the world a greater presumption, than that any should think to convey a gift of God, unless by God he be appointed to do it.'¹

Then again, in the administration of vows, this was wisely restricted to bishops in ancient days, but now priests usurp to themselves authority to do this, *invito et inscio episcopo*.

Surely this is of the essence of Presbyterianism, wherein the priest thinks that he has inherent in his priesthood powers which have been with general consent restricted to the office of bishop.² If priests are to be found within the pale of our Church who are not content with the means of grace offered by the bishops, but pretend to supersede their authority in this matter, it is not surprising that other

¹ Bishop Jeremy Taylor, *Ductor Dubitantium*, bk. iii. chap. iv. Rule 12, § 10, *Works*, ed. Eden, vol. x. p. 339.

² It is of the highest importance that the office of bishop should be jealously guarded. 'Ecclesiæ salus in summi sacerdotis dignitate pendet; cui si non exors quædam et ab omnibus eminens detur potestas, tot in Ecclesiis efficiuntur schismata, quot sacerdotes,'—St. Jerome, *Dial. adv. Luciferianos*, Veronæ, 1735, tom. ii. col. 182.

priests should be found who think themselves qualified to make a new breach, and erect themselves into legislators and judges, capable of re-enacting obsolete customs, and making them binding on the conscience.

But the inconveniency of this is seen to be the more intolerable, when these priests are found to pick and choose what customs or canons they see fit to exercise themselves upon. Still, be it remembered, it is only a question of enforcing these as a matter binding on the conscience of all, on pain of mortal sin: there is no question of recommending this or that to the individual conscience as convenient for discipline.

Some pick out Fasting Communion, which was a custom of the Church, and insist on this, as Mr. Oxenham did in his sermon; and if his text has anything to do with the sermon, it must mean that, in Mr. Oxenham's opinion, any person who, by neglecting Fasting Communion, declines to hear the Church is to be excommunicated by the greater excommunication, 'let him be unto you as a heathen man and a publican.' No wonder so monstrous a conclusion caused some indignation.

But if they do this, why do they not accept for themselves the rules that were prevalent at the same time as this canon or custom of Fasting Communion? I deplore the fact that several cases have been reported to me of persons allowed to depart this life without Communion, either because the priest or the dying person had taken food since the preceding midnight. Let all such priests accept for themselves the canon given in Gratian,¹ enforced also in the decretals,² that a priest is to say his hours, and visit the sick; then he may go to his work in the fields (*opus rurale*), but he must remain fasting till the appointed

¹ *Decretum*, pars i. dist. xci. cap. ii. Lugduni, 1606, col. 433.

² *Decretales Gregorii*, lib. iii., *De Celebratione Missarum*, cap. i., Gloss on *Succurrere*: 'Missam celebrando usque ad statutam horam ut hic dicit id est nonam, vel usque ad tertiam,' Lugduni, 1606, col. 1364.

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hour, that he may be able to attend to the needs of travel-
lers, or the sick, or the dead at a funeral. But when is the
appointed hour? Three o'clock in the afternoon, says the
gloss: but sometimes nine o'clock in the morning. It would
be well if such priests would make a round of their sick
people, and then remain without food until three o'clock
in the afternoon. It will be said that this canon was made
for different times. This is no doubt true, but it has never
been removed from the code of ecclesiastical law; and it
would seem to be quite as much binding in England as the
custom of Fasting Communion.

Similarly, priests and people should on this principle
remain fasting until after High Mass on Sunday, and
hear the sermon fasting: this is the law laid down by the
Anglo-Saxon Canon.¹

But the whole question of the Marriage of the Clergy
is one which is very much to the point in this connection
of argument. Neither East nor West allow bishops to be
married men. In former days, when a man was made a
bishop he was obliged to leave his wife, if he had one,² but
now he is not allowed to have one. With us there is free
option for bishops to do as they like in this matter. In the
West, no priest is allowed to be married. In the East, no
priest is allowed to enter matrimony after his ordination.
Will our rigorist brethren, all of them, accept this rule for
themselves? Then, again, in the East the canons against a
priest being in any way connected with a second marriage
are very severe. No man might be ordained priest who
had himself married twice, or had married other than a
virgin. Yet examples of such marriages as that of Father
Hyacinthe with a rich widow are not unknown amongst us,
though condemned by canons passed within the four

¹ Johnson's *Canons A.C.L.* Oxford, 1850, vol. i. p. 478. Also *Anglo-Saxon Witness*, by Rev. J. Baron, 1869, p. 30. See above, p. 59, note.

² See such passages in St. Gregory of Tours as *Historia Francorum*, lib. i. cap. xlv. Parisiis, 1561, p. 32, &c.

seas, as well as on the Continent. Now, all these rules were drawn up and enacted with a view to the greater reverence for the Sacraments; there is no reason, therefore, why they should not be binding now, unless the idea of reverence has been changed; and if it be changed in one particular, why may it not change in another?

The canons of the Apostles¹ depose or excommunicate all who do not fast on Wednesday and Friday. Where is there any canon repealing this? Truly it has dropped out of our canons and rubrics, and our Church only requires the fast on Friday. But then Fasting Communion stands on much weaker ground; for no canon on this subject was enacted earlier than A.D. 393, and then it was only a local council that issued the canon which has dropped out of our code in England. On this question of fasting the great canonist Durandus brings together all the various regulations, and ends by saying:² 'It is by no means expedient that the things contained in this chapter should be put out under a precept, for many, yea infinite mortal sins would follow;' that is, the precept would not be kept. This is an honest avowal, and most wholesome advice; but the gloss in Gratian seems very shuffling, unless we take into account abrogation by disuser. Upon a decree that the fasts of Wednesday and Friday are on no account to be broken there is the following gloss:³ 'That is, by those who are bound to keep them either by a vow or penance. Or say that this was in the primitive Church of necessity, but now of counsel.' How would one be met with indignant rhetoric if such a gloss were attempted in this essay! What is there to make such a gloss one whit more effective about the Wednesday fast than it would be with us about Fasting Communion? The Wednesday fast has never been repealed, but

¹ Canon lxi. (al. 68), *Bruns*, i. p. 10. See above, p. 80, note 2.

² *De Concilio Celebrando*, pars ii. tit. lvi. Parisiis, 1545, p. 123.

³ *Decretum*, pars iii. *De Consecrat.* dist. iii. cap. xvi. Lugduni, 1606, col. 1969.

Now, all these rules view to the greater no reason, therefore, unless the idea of be changed in one another?

or excommunicate Friday. Where is it has dropped Church only requires communion stands on on this subject was n it was only a local s dropped out of our of fasting the great l the various regula- no means expedient ter should be put out e mortal sins would t be kept. This is an advice; but the gloss we take into account ree that the fasts of account to be broken is, by those who are or penance. Or say of necessity, but now with indignant rhetoric essay! What is there e effective about the us about Fasting Com- ver been repealed, but

above, p. 80, note 2.
sis, 1545, p. 123.
cap. xvi. Lugduni, 1606, col.

been abrogated by disuser; and it has not been enforced by a continuous decree in our rubrics. True; but neither has this rule of Fasting Communion.

It would be tedious to go through the whole list of ancient canons or customs which have now *died out*, as some would say, or, as a canonist would argue, have become abrogated by disuser.

By what right, then, do priests administer the Cup to the laity? This has been freely condemned as a heresy in the West. By what right do priests celebrate the Blessed Sacrament at an early hour without having previously said matins? This was enjoined universally. By what right does any priest vary in any way the ceremonial or ritual from that adopted at the Metropolitan Cathedral? There are many canons on this score. By what right does any priest enter matrimony? All canon law abounds with condemnation of such conduct, or approach to it. By what right are beards of priests allowed to grow, against the canon which says, '*Sacerdos neque comam neque barbam nutriat*'? This too out of reverence for the Sacrament, lest dishonour should be done in the reception of the Cup. By what right does any priest in baptizing pour water on any child which is not certified at the moment to be weak? The Church of England directs immersion; the ancient Church looked askance, to say the least, upon baptism by affusion without immersion: but are we therefore to insist upon 'dipping' like Anabaptists? By what right do priests baptize at other times than Easter, or at the most Pentecost? This has been condemned by many canons. By what right do priests communicate those whom they do not know to have confessed, and received absolution? Yet this is canon law of England, to be found in Lyndwood (and Fasting Communion is not), which has never been repealed in set terms.

It will be answered to this, by the right of the law or

custom, positive or negative, of the Church of England; and it will be a right answer.

But if it is a right answer, and if custom to the contrary has removed binding vigour from these ancient laws or canons, what right has an individual priest, one of the inferior clergy who were never admitted to have sole voice (if any at all) in Church legislation, what right has a priest, *mero motu*, to claim a power of galvanizing into life and vigour a dead canon or custom?

By what right does any individual priest say¹ that to communicate after any food is that 'which God has forbidden,' 'a service which you have great reason to fear He will never accept?' To such an one would St. Chrysostom address his scathing words, 'Let them degrade the Lord Himself, who after supper gave the Communion to His Apostles.' Let them excommunicate the Apostles for receiving after supper.

By what right do priests in England say, as some constantly do, that to communicate otherwise than fasting since the preceding midnight is a mortal sin? By no right human or divine; for there is no positive precept binding in England the contravention of which would be what they call a mortal sin. If they know the meaning of what they say, it is wicked in them 'making the heart of the righteous sad whom God hath not made sad;' if they do not know the meaning, it is unpardonable in them to use such language at random.

¹ *The Duty of Fasting Communion*, a sermon by F. N. Oxenham, M.A. Rivingtons, 1873, p. 20.

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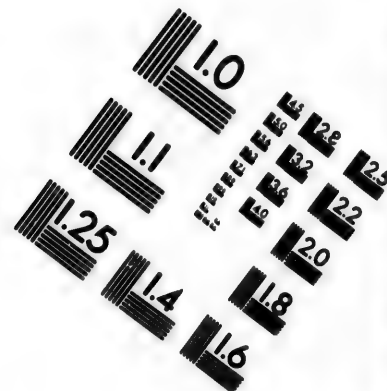
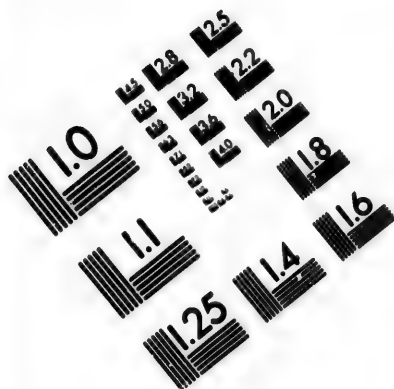
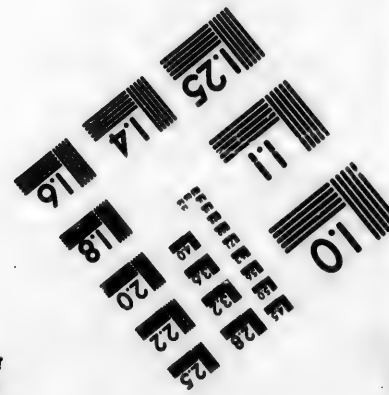
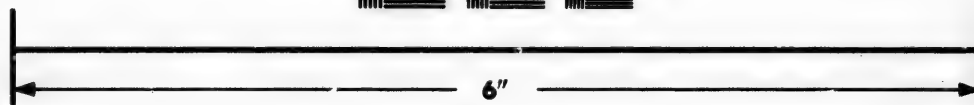
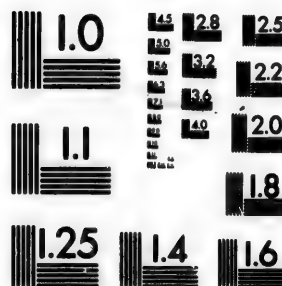


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CHAPTER IV.

THE FAST AFTER COMMUNION.

BUT not only was a fast before Communion advisable and perhaps necessary in former times, when excess in eating was the rule, there was also a constant tendency towards insisting on a fast *after* reception. This we see, for example, in the complaints of St. Chrysostom, that men fasted indeed before, but spoiled all by excess directly after, communicating:—

Let us all also listen to these words, as many of us as come to this Sacred Table with the poor. When we leave we do not seem to have seen them; but we even get drunk and hurry by the hungry: of which the Corinthians also were accused. And when does this happen? say you. Always, and specially at festivals, when specially it ought not to happen. For then, after Communion drunkenness succeeds, and contempt of the poor. And when you have received the Blood, when should be your time for fasting and soberness, you play drunken tricks, and make merry. Why, even if you have taken something very excellent at luncheon [*ariston*], you are careful not to spoil the first with any other unpleasant food; yet when you have been feasting on the Spirit, you bring in on the top of this a delicacy of Satan. Consider, when the Apostles partook of those Sacred Suppers, what they did. Did they not betake themselves to prayer and hymnody? Was it not to holy vigils? Was it not to that long discourse abounding in much thoughtful wisdom? For then He recounted and taught them those great and wonderful things, when Judas had gone to summon His crucifiers. Did you not hear how the three thousand who enjoyed the Communion *continued stedfastly in prayer and in doctrine*, and not in drunkenness and revellings? And you indeed fast before you partake, so that

somehow or other you may show yourself worthy of the Communion; but when you have received, and ought to protract your temperance, you ruin all. Yet, indeed, it is not of equal importance to fast before and after, for truly you ought to be temperate at both times, but most specially *after* you have received the Bridegroom. Before this, then, that you may be worthy to receive; and after, that you may not show yourself unworthy of what you have received. What, then, is it necessary to fast after receiving? I do not say this, nor do I bind you down to it. For this, too, were good, yet I do not enforce it, but I do exhort you not to feast to excessive repletion.¹

The same was complained of in England in the tenth century:—

It is a very bad custom that many men practise both on Sundays, and also on other mass-days, that is, that straightways, at early morn, they desire to hear Mass, and immediately after Mass, from early morn, the whole day over, in drunkenness and feasting they minister to their belly, not to God.²

This was met by a custom of a fast after Communion, intimations of which are found nearly as often as we find the fast before Communion mentioned. The two are found together in the accusations made against St. Chrysostom. 'He communicated others after eating. He ate a small cake *after* Communion.' Both charges seem of equal force. We find reference to the custom also in the sixth century at the second Council of Mâcon (A.D. 585). For although this speaks of reception of the residue of the consecrated elements, and that seemingly by those who were not generally communicants, yet the reception is the same, and there is the same reason for reverence. The latter part of the canon runs as follows:³—

Whatever residue of the sacrifices remain over in the Sacraium after celebration of Mass, let children be brought to

¹ St. Chrysostom, in *Epist. I. ad Cor.* Hom. xxvii. Paris, 1732, vol. x. p. 247. A subsequent fast is to this day a matter of counsel in the Greek Church.

² *Anglo-Saxon Witness*, by Rev. J. Baron, London, 1869, p. 30.

³ Co. Matiscon. II. cau. vi.; *Canones*, Bruns, 1839, vol. ii. p. 251.

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Hom. xxvii. Paris, 1732, vol. x.
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London, 1869, p. 30.
uns, 1839, vol. ii. p. 251.

the church, on Wednesday or Friday, by him whose business it is, and, a *fast having been enjoined them (indicto eis jejunió)*, let them receive the same residue with wine poured over.

Here there is no word of an antecedent fast, but there is of a subsequent fast. Probably the reason why the antecedent fast is not spoken of is, because the children were generally brought after school, when they had not eaten for some time; and therefore there was no fear of antecedent excess. That the children were brought after school, and therefore just before a meal, is seen from the story told by Evagrius,¹ of the Jew's child being taken with the other children at Constantinople. The child did not return at the usual hour from school, and therefore the father asked the reason of his being late. The boy told him the reason, and the infuriate father threw the child into his furnace, from which his mother took him unharmed two days afterwards. Now this shows that it was usual to take the children at such time as they would be naturally expected at home: otherwise the unbelieving Jew would not have learned what his son had been doing. It also shows that there could have been no question asked about any antecedent fast, for the Jews did not fast on Wednesdays or Fridays, even if we suppose it was on a Wednesday or Friday that this happened, as is spoken of at Mâcon. Neither does Evagrius say that at Constantinople there was a subsequent fast. But this subsequent fast seems to have been introduced (after Evagrius wrote, perhaps), for it appears in this canon of Mâcon. It would seem, then, that if an antecedent fast were required of these children, it was only the usual abstinence from food between meals; the children had been to school, and then, instead of going home, they went to church; therefore, as they came to church from school, they were regarded as fasting, and no questions were asked on this

¹ *Hist. Eccl.* lib. iv. cap. xxxvi. *History of the Church*, by Eusebius, Socrates, and Evagrius, (translation), London, 1709, p. 494.

score, and no enactment made in this canon of Mâcon. Only they were bidden to abstain voluntarily for some time afterwards from food, *indicto eis jejuniu*, and then communicated. Indeed, it would seem that Wednesdays and Fridays were chosen because on those days devout Christian men omitted to take the forenoon meal. These children thus communicated would be directed to fast *pro hac vice* with their parents, instead of taking their meal as usual, for children would be exempt from this tradition.

It may be remarked in passing, that this is an argument that the Fathers at Mâcon in the sixth century, and at Constantinople in the fourth, would have reckoned a worshipper as fasting at noon, if he had taken an early light breakfast; for as a rule children always took the *Weckenbrod* in the early morning.

The next notice we have of this subsequent fast is in the passage quoted by Gratian from the supposititious letter of St. Clement to James, the brother of the Lord. This passage, as Berardi¹ points out, is probably from the *Capitularia Regum Francorum*, of the ninth century. Thus the passage runs:—

Let so much holocaust for certain be offered on the altar as ought to suffice the people. But if any remain over, let it not be reserved to the morrow; but with fear and trembling, let it be consumed by the diligence of the clergy. But let not them who consume the residue of the Body of the Lord in the Sacrament immediately betake themselves to the reception of other food, lest they think to mingle common food with the sacred portion. If, therefore, the Lord's portion be eaten early, let the ministers who consumed it fast till twelve o'clock; and if they have received at nine or ten o'clock, let them fast until the evening.²

It is worth while, in passing, to remark how our own rubric is framed on this passage:—

¹ *Gratiani Canones Genuini ab Apocryphis discreti opera et studio C. S. Berardi*, Matriti, 1783, pars ii. cap. i. vol. ii. p. 19.

² *Gratiani Decretum*, pars iii. *De Consecratione*, dist. ii. cap. xxiii. Lugduni, 1606, col. 1921.

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If any remain of that which was consecrated, it shall not be carried out of the church, but the Priest, and such other of the Communicants as he shall then call unto him, shall, immediately after the Blessing, REVERENTLY eat and drink the same.

Here, then, a subsequent abstaining from food for five or six hours after Communion prevailed in France in the ninth century; and perchance we may say that Gratian, by incorporating it into his *Decretum*, recognized its existence at least in the twelfth century.

It would be natural to suppose that this regulation would be found too rigorous for continuance; and we find that in the thirteenth century it had passed away altogether.¹ Some tell us, indeed, that Divine Grace is always given to those who simply and devoutly follow the custom and precepts of the Church, even in the power or capability of fasting for lengthened periods. If this were the case, what need were there for canon law forbidding lengthened fasts? What need for discontinuing this practice of fasting for six hours or so after receiving? Surely there is much more real truth in the position of St. John Cassian, that spiritual virtues and capacity for corporal austerities do not stand on the same ground. At all events, St. Thomas seems to have thought so, for he ascribes the neglect of the fast subsequent to Communion not to decay of devotion, but to increase of devotion—viz. to the multiplication of celebrations. For thus St. Thomas writes:—

¹ At all events in some parts. In the fourteenth century there is a trace of it in England, as the following extract from the renowned *Fupilla Oculi* of John De Burgh will show:—'Post sumpcionem vero Eucharistiæ propter ejus reverentiam convenit a cibo aliquamdiu abstinere: sed non multum diu. Magis enim requiritur preparatio per abinentiam et devotionem ante susceptionem Eucharistize, quam post. . . . Illud autem decretum . . . quod dicit diu esse abstinendum loquitur secundum antiqua tempora, quando raro celebrabantur missæ.'—Pars iv. cap. viii. 2. This Professor of Theology and Chancellor of Cambridge did not agree with St. Chrysostom's saying quoted above:—'It is not of equal importance to fast before and after reception; for truly you ought to be temperate at both times, but *most especially after* you have received the Bridegroom.'

According to the ancient canons it was laid down by Pope Clement I. (Epist. ii. near beginning), as is told in the *Decretum de Cons.* dist. ii. cap. xxiii.: *If the Lord's portion be eaten in the morning, let the ministers who took it fast till noon; and if they received at nine or ten o'clock, let them fast till evening.* For anciently the solemnities of Mass were celebrated less frequently, and with greater preparation. But now, since we must celebrate the sacred mysteries oftener, it CANNOT be easily observed; and therefore it has been ABROGATED BY THE CONTRARY CUSTOM.¹

St. Thomas, then, does not say that this custom had been given up because, from lack of piety, men would not seek grace to maintain this corporal austerity; he says that 'it cannot be easily observed.' We can hardly think that St. Thomas would have maintained, as some do now-a-days, that capacity for corporal fasting is a necessary consequence of, and is always given in answer to, devout worship. Nothing of this kind does St. Thomas say, but '*non posset de facili observari.*'

Next, St. Thomas says that this canon, as he thinks it, of St. Clement has been abrogated. But how? Does he say, with Mr. Poyntz, that this, 'not having been repealed, is still in force?' No, he does not; he says it has been '*abrogated by the contrary custom.*'

So, then, St. Thomas is at one with the argument of this essay on abrogation by disuser.

Here is a custom which St. Thomas thinks comes from no less antiquity than that of one who was contemporary with the Apostles themselves; ay, from one of whom an Apostle said, his name was in the Book of Life. This was laid down, *statutum*, by St. Clement, Pope of Rome. It is a decree concerning reverence due to the most sacred office of the Christian religion; a decree which has for its object greater devotion to our blessed Lord Himself; and St. Thomas, without hesitation or apology, says it cannot

¹ St. Thomas, *Summa*, pars iii. quest. lxxx. art. 8, *ad finem*, Venetiis, 1757, tom. v. p. 547, col. 2.

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be kept, and therefore has been abrogated, not by direct
enactment of any council, nor by the decree of any suc-
ceeding Pope, but by *the contrary custom.*

I therefore maintain, that just as the custom of fasting
after reception, which prevailed at one time, 'has been
abrogated by the contrary custom,' as St. Thomas says;
so now in England the custom of fasting from the previous
midnight before reception has also 'been abrogated by
the contrary custom.' And for the same reason, *quia non*
posset de facili observari, 'because it cannot be easily
observed.'

PART III.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE FATHERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE AUTHORITY OF INDIVIDUAL FATHERS.

'UNE des causes du relâchement de la discipline et de la corruption des mœurs dans les derniers siècles, a été de prendre pour lois les opinions des Docteurs particuliers.' Thus wrote the historian Fleury,¹ and his opinion is the more valuable since his particular line of study must have forced him to consider the question. But all must have observed that short quotations from the Fathers are constantly adduced, apart from their context, as if they were conclusive on a subject, without respect being had to the particular value of the quotation. Such quotations must be received with respect, but they do not bind the conscience, nor do they necessarily cause blame to attach to those who do not agree with them. The answer of Archbishop Hypatius of Ephesus, in A.D. 533, to some Eutychians is much to the purpose. Certain Easterns, invited to a conference by the Emperor Justinian, had quoted some passages from St. Cyril, which seemed to them to wear an Eutychian face. 'We receive,' said the archbishop, 'whatever agrees with his synodal letters which have been

¹ *Institution au Droit Ecclesiastique*, part. i. cap. ii. *Opuscules*, 1780, vol. ii. p. 163.

approved in the council—viz. the letter to Nestorius, and the letter to the Easterns. What is not agreeable to these we neither condemn nor receive as an ecclesiastical law.¹ This seems to give the exact position of an extract from a Father: we neither accept it as of itself binding, nor reject it as of no value.

Such quotations show that certain opinions were held without blame, or that certain customs obtained at the time of their being written. But in the matter of customs, that doctors of great name have spoken strongly in favour of them, does not necessitate their being continued always in the Church.

We have seen already that in the third and fourth centuries, and later, there prevailed gross habits of eating, which have amongst us in England in a great measure been overcome; so that the cause for the custom of communicating fasting having passed away with us, the passages in particular Fathers may all the less be pressed into a law for us now.

But as passages are now constantly quoted from the Fathers on this subject without much careful examination of their real bearing on the whole question, I have here collected all the passages in the early Fathers that I can find referred to with a view of ascertaining their real value.

In ancient days the passage in St. Augustine influenced most writers on the ecclesiastical offices. St. Isidore² at the commencement of the seventh century incorporates St. Augustine's words with his own remarks, and succeeding writers either employ his words without acknowledgment, or refer to him by name. An extract from the passage in St. Augustine found its way into Gratian's³ *Decretum* in

¹ Paris, 1701, tom. iv. p. 338. *The Ecclesiastical History of M. L'Abbe Fleury*, London, 1720, vol. iv. p. 112.

² St. Isidore, *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis*, lib. i. cap. xviii. Apud Hittorpium, *De Divinis Officiis*, Romæ, 1591, p. 6.

³ *Decretum*, pars iii. *De Consecratione*, dist. ii. cap. liv. Lugduni, 1606, col. 1940.

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such a form as seemingly to lead St. Thomas Aquinas into error. This passage has indeed been quoted so persistently and confidently, that men have wholly lost sight of its history, and therefore have greatly misstated its meaning. The letter in which it occurs was written three years after the Council of Carthage which had re-enacted the Canon of Hippo on Fasting Communion. The Council of Hippo was held in A.D. 393, in consequence of St. Augustine's earnest appeal to the Metropolitan of Carthage, and St. Augustine had much influence at the council. The Council of Carthage was held some four years after, when St. Augustine was bishop, and was probably present. The letter was written in answer to certain questions, and the portion from which the passage is taken is wholly about the matters connected with the Canon of Hippo on Fasting Communion, and its exception of the *Cena Dominica*. He therefore naturally refers to this canon, and in doing so uses the language familiar to himself and his hearers, as being the language of the council of the Apostles at the first council at Jerusalem: 'Placuit Spiritui Sancto; it seemed good to the Holy Ghost.' This does not make this particular Canon of Hippo more binding upon us than the canons of the Apostolic council, or the canons of the Council of Nicæa, or of any other properly constituted council, local or general. As canons they all stand on the same ground, and the same language may be used of them all. But just as the Trullan Council recognized the Canon of Hippo with great respect, but annulled it so far as it might seem to militate against Lenten strictness, so we may listen to St. Augustine and the Canon of Hippo with respect, but decline to be bound by the enactments of the council. For just as a direct revelation of the Holy Spirit may be of local and temporal importance¹ only, so a

¹ Such as the revelations made to Samuel and the seers of old; or to David for his own personal guidance; or to the prophets of the early Church for an immediate object, such as the conversion of souls (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25); or to St. Cyprian about the duration of a persecution; or such like.

canon of discipline may be wholly due to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and yet be not necessarily binding always. St. Augustine himself says of one canon of which the Apostles said 'Placuit Spiritui Sancto,' that if any in his day thought of observing it he was laughed at by his neighbours.¹ If that particular canon, though passed by Apostles, had a local and temporal bearing, and was never annulled by any direct enactment, and yet was not regarded as binding by St. Augustine, it is possible that the same may be said of other canons. So of this canon of Fasting Communion, the gross habits of the degenerate Christians of the day made such a canon very advisable and even necessary; but these having passed away, the necessity of the canon has passed away with them. But some, not knowing that St. Augustine is referring to the enactment of the council, are not slow to assert that he is laying down a principle that Fasting Communion was a divine regulation. This opinion must disappear when the history of the passage is examined.

The testimony of St. Augustine, then, is that at the end of the fourth century it had been found necessary to pass a canon for Fasting Communion in Africa, with the provision that Maundy Thursday was excepted from the general rule. This is precisely what we find elsewhere.

The authority next relied upon is that of St. Chrysostom, but, of the two passages alleged from his voluminous writings, one is merely an assertion that the Lenten fast was regarded as making worthy of the Easter Communion, and the other occurs in the articles of accusation. This, as is naturally said, shows the feeling of the time. True, but

¹ *Contra Faustum Manichæum*, lib. xxxii. cap. xlii.: 'Quis jam hoc Christianus observat ut turdos vel minutiores aviculas non attingat nisi quarum sanguis effusus est, aut leporem non edat si manu a cervice percussus nullo cruento vulnere occisus est? Et qui forte pauci adhuc tangere ista formidant a cæteris irridentur.' (*Opera*, Parisiis, 1694, tom. viii. col. 457.) Yet this was, indeed, as St. Chrysostom says, Περὶ τῶν νόμων, *In Acta*, Hom. xxxiii. tom. ix. p. 257, D.

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just as the Puritans heaped strange charges against Arch-
bishop Laud when determined on his murder, so the Arch-
deacon John had his many black rabbits which he asserted
made a black horse.¹ We must remember, too, that one
article of accusation was that 'he had eaten a small cake
just after Communion;' but St. Thomas Aquinas tells us
that the subsequent fast has been abrogated by disuser:
and why, then, must the other habit be said to be
binding? Both are produced as accusations of St. Chry-
sostom: both therefore (it may be argued) were regarded
as irreverent at the time. The passage, therefore, cannot
well be produced as enforcing one habit without the other.

Of the other passages from the Fathers, one, that of
Pope Soter, is from the false decretals, a forgery of the
eighth century; two, St. Basil and his imitator St. Am-
brose, speak of the Lenten fast before Communion; two,
St. Gregory and St. Epiphanius, merely speak of the *time*
of celebration, and have no word of a fast before Com-
munion at all; while Tertullian intimates that there was
a habit of partaking of the reserved Sacrament before every
meal to consecrate the food; St. Cyprian has no word of
blame for the Aquarii for celebrating after supper; and the
historians, of whom Socrates is taken as a sample, tell us
that the custom of receiving after supper, as a general
habit, and not only on Maundy Thursday, lasted in Egypt
until the fifth century. Nor is this contradicted by the
evidence of three patriarchs of Alexandria, Dionysius,
Timothy, and Theophilus, who certainly were no rigorists.

St. Augustine, then, and St. Chrysostom are the only
writers in the first five centuries who speak strongly about
taking no food before Communion: none others have been
adduced who say a word about the necessity of a fast from
midnight before Communion. Of these St. Chrysostom
admits that a man who is not fasting may be a worthy

¹ *St. Chrysostom: his Life and Times*, by Rev. W. R. W. Stephens,
Murray, 1872, p. 327.

receiver, and St. Augustine speaks of a praiseworthy custom of receiving after food on Maundy Thursday. This is language which would be intolerable to rigorists of our own time.

The general testimony of the early Fathers, therefore, is decidedly against the teaching of the rigorists, that no one can be a worthy receiver unless he have previously abstained from food from the previous midnight.

It is true that from the beginning of the seventh century we begin to find different language. But even then for some time the writers acknowledge that such a rule was necessary, because of the gross habits of eating and drinking to excess; so that none might baptize or be baptized, might confirm or be confirmed, might ordain or be ordained, might celebrate or communicate, or might take an oath in a court of law, unless he were at the time fasting.

It is only in the middle of the thirteenth century that we first hear of the 'natural' fast from the commencement of the day of the Roman Catholic Church—viz. midnight; and it is only in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries that we hear of any doctrinal value being attached to the habit.

If the custom was, indeed, so important as some would have us believe the Fathers to have thought, we cannot suppose either that they would not have said more on the subject, or that, speaking so nearly on the subject as some of them do, they should not have spoken more fully and decisively. St. Jerome has not a word which can be alleged as having even the most distant reference to the subject, yet he speaks continually of fasting, and frequently of communicating. The Fathers who are cited in the first four centuries, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. Gregory, St. Basil, St. Ambrose, St. Epiphanius, seem to know nothing whatever of the necessity of a fast from midnight to prepare the mouth and body for reception. They only speak of the necessity, or advantage, of a preceding *ecclesiastical* fast to purify, and make worthy the soul as a preparation for Communion.

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But if they had severally said that they did mean that
Communion should be preceded by a fast from midnight,
this would command our respect, but not oblige the
conscience. For the laws of the Church do not depend
upon the particular statements of individual Fathers, but
upon the collective utterance of a council.

CHAPTER II.

POPE SOTER. A.D. 170.

TOWARDS the end of the eighth century there appeared a collection of canons and decretal letters of Popes, supposed to have been gathered by one Bishop Isidore. This collection was first brought into Germany from Spain. The fact that it came from Spain under the name of Isidore made men ascribe the collection to the renowned St. Isidore of Seville, whose learning was known throughout the Church at large; and this again contributed much to the ready acceptance of the decretals. These professed to be of immense value, for there were letters of the earliest Popes of Rome, showing very clearly that, from the first, the Bishops of Rome had not only been consulted, but that they had issued directions to all bishops in the whole Church, as if they were indeed the 'lords over God's heritage.' Nay, even St. James himself, the Lord's brother, the Bishop of Jerusalem, the central resort of the whole Church till the destruction of the Temple, even St. James was not free from this control. For here, in this collection, were letters from St. Clement of Rome, giving him directions how to conduct divine worship, and how to regulate ecclesiastical affairs. It is manifest at once that the value and importance of such documents would be of surpassing interest to the Church at large, on the supposition that they were genuine.

But not long after they had been issued, Hincmar, the acute Archbishop of Rheims, expressed his doubts about their authenticity. He said that the deeply learned Diony-

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sus, who, in his humility, gave himself the title of Exiguus (who died A.D. 540), had with great labour collected and issued a body of canon law. He had the whole stores of the Vatican at his disposal, and yet these decretals were perfectly unknown to him. It could not be said that Dionysius was a careless editor who could have overlooked them, for he was well known as a careful and laborious student, and he professed to have given his very best endeavours to gather all the canons he could find. How was it, then, that so many letters should have escaped the notice of a man who lived and studied at Rome, whence these letters were supposed to have issued? Next, how was it they should have been collected in Spain, and have been unknown at Rome? Thus argued Archbishop Hincmar; but the documents were of very great advantage to the Curia of Rome, therefore they were pressed forward as much as possible. If true, they proved the claim of Rome to universal empire over the Church Catholic, therefore Rome accepted them as true. As the Roman Catholic priest Joseph Berington wrote, some sixty years ago,¹ 'We know what use was made of the general ignorance, in order to give currency and validity to the supposed authenticity of certain documents by which the prerogative of the Roman See was to be extended; but which the penetration of a just criticism has long since pronounced to be spurious. The design of these fictitious compositions was to show that all the power that was at that period [circ. A.D. 800] assumed by the Pontiffs was founded on the acts of ancient councils and the dogmatical epistles of their early predecessors; and if any proof of the grossest ignorance or of the most fixed apathy were wanting, it might be hence adduced that such palpable fictions were generally received without being examined, or, if examined, that the fraud remained undetected.' Thus it happened that for a long time these forgeries passed current as true.

¹ *A Literary History of the Middle Ages*, London, 1814, p. 166.

With a truth-loving Christian it would always be a strong argument against any claim that, to substantiate it, recourse must be had to lies and forgery. But so it has not been with the Court of Rome. In support of its pretensions Canons of Nicæa have been cited which have not been found in any properly authenticated copy of the canons; false decretals and false canons have been issued and palmed off on the unsuspecting minds of religious men; and in the eleventh century 'a fiction was contrived with more shameless effrontery, under the denomination of the Donation of Constantine,'¹ which professed to yield the kingdom of Rome to the Pope! Of later years, the spirit of forgery has been content with tampering with the text of the Fathers.²

These decretals have been proved false by many arguments. The Calvinist David Blondel with remarkable acumen has exploded them; but though we must sympathize with his indignation at the forgery, we could wish he had not rivalled Maldonatus in the violence of his language.

First, then, it is manifestly impossible that such documents could have lain hid for seven centuries. It is quite impossible to suppose that important letters, deciding the ritual and discipline of the Christian world, written by martyrs and Bishops of Rome, could have remained unknown for six or seven centuries; so unknown that no trace of much of their contents should have been found earlier than the eighth century.

Next, how could such letters have escaped the research of Dionysius Exiguus at Rome, that scrutinizing book-worm? They were very much to his purpose; and while it is conceivable that one or two might have escaped his notice, the supposition that such a mass of letters should have been

¹ Berington's *History of the Middle Ages*, p. 225.

² A year or two back some tracts were issued on this subject. The arrows were sharp enough but the bow strangely weak.

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unknown to him, writing and studying at Rome, is only
 tenable on the ground of their absolute falsity.

Thirdly, in a marvellous way these letters are a *cento* of
 the writings of councils, fathers, and royal edicts of various
 dates, but certainly long after the time of the Popes who
 were supposed to have used such language. This selection
 has been made with a great deal of cleverness : the language
 has been mutilated, curtailed, and worked up to make it
 appear as truthful as possible. If, then, the later writers
 were indebted to these decretals for their phrases, how
 could they have helped naming their authority, which
 would have added weight to their own utterance ?

Next, it is remarkable that the early Popes should have
 been able to cite Scripture in the same words as the
 Vulgate, a revision which is generally thought to be due to
 St. Jerome, at the commencement of the fifth century.

Then, again, it is noteworthy that the early Popes, as
 thus represented, wrote very bad Latin, and all in the same
 style. Could they all have had one master, or one
 amanuensis ? Probably all had one amanuensis who lived
 in the eighth century.

It is next remarkable that there is no word of interest
 for the great events which troubled the early Church. The
 early heretics are not named. There is no reference to
 times of persecutions or worldly troubles ; no encouragement
 of martyrs or confessors ; no dealing with questions of the
 lapsed and their penance ; no discussion of flight in perse-
 cution.

Then, if they were really written by Popes of Rome to
 various bishops of widely distant sees, can we suppose
 that they would be unknown in Rome, and see light first in
 Germany or France, whither they had travelled from the
 Spanish peninsula ? This is certainly very much unlike the
 later policy of the Roman Curia, which generally knew
 anything which would seem to tend to its own advantage.

Now, seeing that in the eighth century the habit of

Fasting Communion had become common, it would be expected that an impostor would ascribe this to a papal rescript or edict. Just as he ascribes the fast after Communion to a letter of St. Clement to St. James, Bishop of Jerusalem, as embodying a command to him of St. Peter, so he ascribes to Pope Soter a canon forbidding priests to consecrate after taking food.

The pseudo-Isidore (who well calls himself *peccator*) attributes two decretal letters to Pope Soter of Rome, both of which are rather clumsy forgeries. The first gives him the title of *Apostolica Sedis Archiepiscopus*, a title quite unknown in his day. The letter is dated by the names of consuls who had enjoyed that office long before Soter was bishop. The passages from Scripture are cited in the *Vulgate* revision of St. Jerome, which dates from the fifth century, and the doctrinal discussion of the Incarnation is much indebted to the argument and language of St. Leo in the sixth century.

The second decretal letter is supposed to be addressed to the Bishops of Italy. In it it is said that it is a great abuse that women consecrated to God, and nuns, should be allowed to touch the sacred vessels or palls, or to bear incense round the altar. This is spoken of as a *pestis* which must be stamped out. It is early times for these holy women to have been so troublesome.

The second canon here laid down is, that each priest when celebrating was to have another behind him, to succeed to his work in case he should faint.

The third rule is, that no one is to dare to offer Mass after food and drink, or any even the smallest thing taken.

This is given by Carranza as a veritable order of Pope Soter;¹ but, though it would appear natural to a forger of

¹ *Summa omnium Conciliorum collecta* per F. Barth. Carranzam, Parisiis, 1668, p. 37. Others later than this seem to cling to the hope that these decretals may be genuine. 'Epistolas duas exaravit Soter, quas decretales

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the eighth century, there is no ground whatever for
supposing that such a rule existed in the time of Pope
Soter, or that this Bishop of Rome left behind him any
such documents as the letters in question.

The only verdict that can be given about this canon is,
that it does not at all suit the times to which it professes to
belong.

vocant. . . . Has hæretici fictitias arbitrantur, sed ineptè ut testimonia
Catholicorum evincunt.' (*Pontificum Doctum*, per G. J. ab Eggs, Coloniae,
1718, p. 26.) See, however, *Gratiani Canones Genuini ab Apocryphis discreti*,
Operâ C. S. Berardi, Matriti, 1783; and Van Espen, *Dissertatio de Collectione*
Isidori, Opera, Lovanii, 1753, tom. iii. p. 461.

CHAPTER III.

TERTULLIAN. A.D. 200.

THE earliest quotation alleged in favour of Fasting Communion that is not (like the supposed Canon of Pope Soter) from a forged document is from Tertullian. He is writing to his wife to dissuade her from marrying a second time in case he died first. Amongst other arguments he adduces several, which show the inconvenience and discomfort that would arise if she, a Christian woman, married a heathen. It is in this connection¹ that the passage in question occurs.

Non sciet maritus quid secreto ante omnem cibum gustes?
Et si sciverit esse panem, non illum credit esse qui dicitur?

Will not thy husband know what it is you taste secretly before all food? And if he have known it to be bread, will he not believe it to be that which it is said to be?

From this passage, then, we may learn that the three following practices were not unknown at the end of the second century: (1) The *portio Dominica* was reserved; (2) It was reserved and partaken in private houses; (3) It was taken *ante omnem cibum*. These practices were not unknown. This is proved by this passage in Tertullian; but nothing more can be proved than this. It would be valueless logic to argue that, because these were the habits of Tertullian's wife, therefore they were compulsory upon all African Christians, or on the whole world. Similarly,

¹ *Ad Uxorem*, lib. ii. cap. v., *Opera*, Parisiis, 1675, p. 169 B.

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it would be futile to argue that, because such habits were allowed to the wife who (according to the supposition) had a heathen husband, therefore they were allowed to all, whether there were a chance of domestic persecution or not. There is no statement here that it is a general custom. Still it may be allowed, for argument's sake, that these three customs were prevalent in North Africa at the end of the second century. Let us see how this affects us now in the nineteenth century.

(1) The reservation of the *Portio Dominica* was customary. This probably arose from the prevalence of heathen persecution, which made it dangerous for the laity to resort often to the places where the priests used to consecrate. As time went on the practice was continued or not, as the necessities or the discretion of the Church demanded. In England the reservation has been abandoned, because of the terrible profanation of the Sacrament about the time of the Reformation. The rubric in our Prayer Book which prevents this seems founded upon the passage cited in Gratian, which is probably due to the ninth century. There is no general rule in the Church against this; but the Church of England, in her undoubted right, has forbidden reservation by this particular rubric. This habit, therefore, though recognized by Tertullian, is clearly not binding on us now, since it has been directly abrogated for us by our own National Church.

(2) Home *reception* was permitted. This is distinct from reservation, because reservation in Church was practised long after home reception had died out. For it died out rather than was forbidden. The monks who lived far from any priest were allowed and encouraged to reserve the Eucharist in their cells for home reception, as St. Basil¹ tells us. So when the 'tall brethren' were burnt out by

¹ Ep. xciii. (nl. 289) *Ad Casariam Patriciam de Communione, Opera*, ed. Gaume, Paris, 1839, tom. iii. p. 267. See the whole letter translated below, at the beginning of chapter vi.

Theophilus of Alexandria, the reserved Eucharist was burnt in their huts.¹ In pretended view of persecution, the Eutychian Bishop, Dorotheus of Thessalonica, consecrated baskets full, and distributed to his flock when he heard of the meeting of the council to condemn his tenets. But when the Church had freedom of worship without persecution, and priests became multiplied, then the need of the custom died out, and the custom itself became discontinued. With us the same rubric which forbids reservation also prohibits home reception, though our Church allows special home celebration for the sick. Two out of the three customs, then, are directly against the rule of the National Church of England. It can therefore be hardly said that the third custom is binding from this testimony of Tertulian. The passage cannot well be claimed as enforcing Fasting Communion unless reservation and home reception be also insisted upon. It may be cited as bearing witness to customs then allowed in Africa, and not as testifying to a law binding now in England.

(3) There was also the custom of receiving *ante omnem cibum*. But what does this mean? The general interpretation in modern times is that it implies a habit of Fasting Communion. So far as I know, this meaning was attached to the passage at the commencement of the seventeenth century; and when a meaning has once been given to a passage, it is often taken for granted that this must be the meaning, and it is quoted over and over again without question. But would it have been so very difficult for the woman to have concealed the taking the *portio* in the earliest dusk of dawn? Why the man called to his wife² for the earliest portion of food, the *jentaculum*, when she went to prepare or to produce this, could she not have

¹ Συγκάβουσ τὰς βίβλους πάσας ἐνδιαθέτους καὶ σπονδαίας, καὶ παύθων ἐν, καὶ τὰ σύμβολα τῶν μυστηρίων.—*Palladii Vita S. Chrysostomi*, cap. vii.; *Opera*, St. Chrys. Parisiis, tom. xiii. p. 23 D.

² St. Gregory of Tours, *De Glorid Confessorum*, cap. xxxi.; *Opera*, Parisiis, 1699, col. 919.

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monum, cap. xxxi.; *Opera*, Parisiis,

taken the *portio* without being observed? Or, if it be
 argued that this particular heathen husband did not always
 take this meal, and did not require or allow his wife to take
 such an early morsel of food, there would have been, there
 must have been, many opportunities of taking the reserved
portio some time before the prandium at 10 or 11 A.M.
 For the women had their own private apartments, and if
 the reception were to be once some time in the morning
 with the only condition that it was to be before any food at
 all was taken in the day, it could not have been difficult to
 have chosen out a moment of privacy. It is, then, possible
 that the meaning attached to the words by Giustiniani,
 Petau, and others, may not be the right meaning after all,
 but that there may be another meaning which is more
 likely to be the true one.

For it is quite possible that the word *omnem* may have
 its common distributive¹ force, and the 'before all food'
 may really have the meaning of 'before every meal.'

At first sight, it may be that this will not at once meet
 with ready acceptance, but there are many arguments
 which render this interpretation not only possible, but most
 probable.

For, if the common rendering be the true meaning of
 Tertullian, we should have expected something in addition.
 There is required the addition of something like 'primo
 mane,'² or the phrase 'ante primum cibum,' or other such,
 if before all food since the stroke of midnight next pre-
 ceding were meant. If there had been no such rule as

¹ In this sense it would be said to refer 'ad quantitatem discretam.' Not
 only would it mean 'every kind of,' like the *omne olus* of Horace, but 'every,'
 like the 'militat omnis amans' of Ovid, or the 'omnia facere omnis debet' of
 Cicero, or the 'exhorruit omnis mater' and 'in omni turre furentem' of
 Valerius Flaccus, or the 'omnis famas' of St. Ambrose, or the 'omni die'
 of some canons, or the 'omnis vivens' of St. Jerome.

² The traditional expressions amongst medical men show that, if anything
 is to be taken before any food during the day since sleep, the phrase is 'primo
 mane;' if it is to be taken before the principal meal of the day it is 'ante
 prandium.'

that of the so-called 'natural' fast in the seventeenth century, it is hardly likely¹ that this meaning would have been affixed to the words.

Then, again, if it be 'before every meal,' then, indeed, the heathen husband would soon and readily discover a habit so frequent. If whenever they took their meals together there was something taken by the wife before the meal commenced, it would be difficult to conceal this habit; whereas a reception in the early dusk of dawn would easily have been disguised.

But the strongest argument is, that we should have expected that the early Christians must have had some especially solemn way of blessing their food. The heathens even consecrated their meals by a libation. The Jews had their solemn form of blessing their meals. Must not the Christians have borrowed from the Jews some of their pious customs in this respect? Nay, does not St. Paul suggest this, or rather does he not point to a common custom among the Christians as that which sanctifies all meats to their use? In his first pastoral Epistle he affirms the lawfulness of all meats without distinction on this one condition, that the meat be 'received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.'² Now this occurs in the middle of a paragraph where the Apostle is defending the truth of the Incarnation against some who would rise to impugn it. Those who denied the Incarnation would condemn marriage and prohibit meats; but the Christians who rightly believed, every creature of God was permissible on one condition, if it be *μετὰ εὐχαριστία*

¹ I think it probable that scholars would agree that it is scarcely possible to translate 'ante omnem cibum' by 'before any food taken since midnight.' Had there been any previous reference to the first food of the day, or any discussion about the commencement of the day, it might, perhaps, have been possible; but I am bold to maintain that, taken in its bald position, it is impossible to translate 'ante omnem cibum' in a manner which will make it testify to a practice of Fasting Communion in the modern sense of the phrase.

² Timothy iv. 5.

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λαμβάνόμενον. Now the word *εὐχαριστία* was not yet appropriated to the noblest sense, as it has been since ; still it is hardly possible to exclude some reference here to the Blessed Sacrament. The Apostle uses words which may either mean ' with thanksgiving ' or ' after Eucharists ; ' and about the meal thus partaken of, he uses also words which would sound strong, ' for it is sanctified (*ἁγιάζεται*, " made holy ") by the *Word of God* and invocation.' St. Basil tells us that the Lord in mercy chose out the simplest form of food—bread and wine—to be the means of conveying to us His benefits, in order that our minds might be turned to Him and His Passion whenever we partake of any food. May we not see in these words of St. Paul some reference to the Eucharist ?

The Blessed Sacrament itself was instituted at a meal. The Lord was known at Emmaus in the Breaking of Bread, that is, as St. Augustine¹ teaches, in the Blessed Sacrament. The evening meal at Emmaus thus commenced. Thenceforward the phrase ' breaking of bread ' became known for the Holy Eucharist. For example, in the second chapter of the Acts, the Syriac Version (which dates not later than A.D. 200), for ' the Breaking of Bread,' has the Greek word Eucharist transferred into Syriac letters.

It is perfectly true that it has been doubted by some whether the phrase does always mean the Holy Eucharist, or whether it does not sometimes mean merely an ordinary meal.² But this very fact that there is a doubt may

¹ 'Eja fratres ubi voluit Dominus agnoscī? In fractione panis. Securi sumus panem frangimus, et Dominum agnoscimus. Noluit agnoscī nisi ibi propter nos qui non eum visuri eramus in carne et tamen manducaturi eramus ejus carne.' (Serm. cccxxv. (al. *de tempore* 140), *Operā*, Parisiis, 1683, tom. v. col. 990 ; compare also Serm. lxxxix. (al. 9), col. 487 E, Serm. cccxxii. (al. *de tempore* 144), col. 983 D, Serm. cccxxix. (al. *de temp.* 146), col. 998 D.) Giustiniani (in 1 Cor. x. 16, tom. i. p. 538) does not agree with St. Augustine : ' Non simplicem fractionem intelligit *qualis erat illa* cujus meminit Lucas (cap. xxiv. p. 35) quā ingentium necessitati consulebatur.'

² 'Nam licet fractio panis possit victum communem tantum significare,

be claimed in favour of this suggested interpretation of Tertullian. For if, at first, every meal that was differentially Christian commenced with the Eucharist, and this was known as the Breaking of Bread, it is clear that the phrase would have a double acceptation. There would be the special sense of the Holy Eucharist itself, and there would be the general sense (known to the world) of the meal which was consecrated, or sanctified, by commencing with the reception of the Eucharist. The very fact that there is a dispute as to what is meant by the phrase, is a strong argument in favour of the proposed rendering.

Hence, we can see why the Apostles are described as 'breaking bread from house to house.' They, as the only men capable of consecrating the Eucharist, went from house to house to consecrate, and thus to bless the food. This, too, explains the rather difficult passage in the shipwreck of St. Paul. The Apostle encouraged the sailors and others on board to take a good meal by setting the example himself. He began his meal by the consecration of the Eucharist, and, it is said by St. Luke, 'in the presence of *them all*,' to show that the usual reserve of the mysteries was here broken through in the presence of the danger of immediate death,

tamen cum in Cœnâ Domini panis signanter frangi dicatur: cum in vetustissimis Ecclesiis quotidie Eucharistiam celebrare moris esset: cum ex oblationibus a populo factis sumi solerent panis et vinum ad eum usum sacrum: dubitari vix potest quin hic [Acts ii. 48] ter mille homines in quotidianâ Communionem et fractionem panis Cœnam Domini celebraverint.—Bishop Pearson, *Lectio in Acta Apost. I. Opera Posthuma*, London, 1688, p. 34.

¹ Acts ii. 46. There can be no mistake about the meaning in such places as Acts xx. 7. 'When the disciples came together to break bread.' St. Thomas Aquinas in his Commentary upon 1 Cor. xi. refers the excess there condemned by the Apostle to participation in the Sacrament itself. 'In primitivâ Ecclesiâ fideles panem et vinum offerebant, quæ consecrabantur in Sanguinem et Corpus Christi, quibus jam consecratis divites qui multa obtulerant, eadem sibi repetebant.' And again, '*Alius autem* scilicet dives, qui multa obtulit *côrius est* ad literam; propter hoc quod nimium sumpsit de vino consecrato.' (*Opera*, tom. xvi. fol. 75, Romæ, 1570.) St. Thomas, therefore, would seem to think that the 'portio Dominica' was larger in the earliest times than with us. This, perhaps, may account for the early feeling that it broke the ecclesiastical fast.

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and the consecration took place even in the presence of the
heathen. It is impossible to suppose that St. Luke is not
affirming that this was a consecration of the Eucharist;
for he uses the same words, and almost the same form of
words, in which he himself and his master St. Paul record
the institution of the Blessed Sacrament. This is more
clearly seen in the original than in the Authorized
Version, therefore the three passages are here placed in
juxtaposition:—

S. LUKE xxii. 19.	ACTS xxvii. 35.	1 COR. xi. 23, 24.
λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐχαριστήσας	λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐχαρίστησεν	ἔλαβεν ἄρτον καὶ εὐχαριστήσας
ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς.	τῷ Θεῷ ἐνώπιον πάντων καὶ κλάσας ἤρξατο ἐσθίειν.	ἔκλασεν.

From this comparison it will be seen that the 'before them
all' is the inserted peculiarity: this presence of the heathen
also explains the necessity of the addition of τῷ Θεῷ in this
account. It is really impossible to suppose that St. Luke
could have written these words in the Book of the Acts with-
out having a definite intention of speaking of the Blessed
Sacrament. The commentators allow there must be some
reference to the Eucharist, but do not quite see what is
meant. It certainly seems that this would be the distinc-
tively Christian mode of commencing a meal; and now to
inspire the Christians with fortitude, so that they might set
the example of courageous demeanour, St. Paul breaks
through the sacred reserve with which the Sacrament was
commonly fenced in, and 'breaks bread in presence of all,'
heathens as well as Christians. The result was that the
heathens, inspirited by the courage displayed by the little
flock in their midst, were the better nerved for the effort they
had all to make in order to save the lives of all on board.
This consecration before the meal was probably only the
performing in public what was generally reserved for the
company of the faithful. The extreme peril compelled

St. Paul to break the reserve, that the Christians might not lack the consolation of the Bread of Life in that extremity.

With this agrees the opinion of Bishop Pearson,¹ 'whose very dust is worth gold.' He writes, 'The meals of the disciples were at that time common and sacred; that is, they celebrated the Sacrament of the Eucharist in a common feast.'

This Apostolic custom may well have lingered on for a century, and Christians may well have been in the blessed habit of 'sanctifying' their meals by taking each *μετὰ εὐχαριστίας* in the highest and best sense.² Such, indeed, seems to be the opinion of one well qualified by his learning to give weight to any conjecture. Father Jean Fronteau, Chancellor of the University of Paris in the

¹ 'Mensæ enim discipulorum tunc temporis communes et sacræ etiam fuere: hoc est in communi convictu Sacramentum Eucharistiæ celebrabant.'—*Lectioes in Acta Apostolorum*, iii. § vi.; *Opera Posthuma*, 1688, p. 53.

² There is a very striking custom mentioned by Martene in his account of the rites of the monks. He tells us that in some six Uses of the monks, on Maundy Thursday *Hosts* (presumably unconsecrated) are placed on the bread to be eaten at the refectory after Mass. 'Missâ finitâ, Conventus sedet in choro, donec illi qui ad Missam ministraverint sint divestiti. Tunc Prior præcedit et seniores post eum, sicut sunt in ordine, pueri vero in ultimum euntes in modum processionis, sicut quotidie fit ad processionem capituli; et venientes in refectorium sedent ad mensas unusquisque in suo ordine: mensæ debent esse coopertæ, *Hostiæ vero ponantur per mensas super panes*. Factâ benedictione a Priore sub silentio, qui voluerit, accipiat *hostiam* et comedat Priore tamen incipiente.' (*De Ritibus Monachorum*, lib. iii. cap. xiii. § 49, Antuerpiæ, 1764, tom. iv. p. 129.) Fleury (*Mœurs des Chrétiens*, § 53) says that most probably the monks preserve many of the customs of the earliest Christians. This is a striking remembrance of the time when the meal was blessed by participation in a *Hostia* which had been consecrated. There is also an interesting story told by Gregory of Tours which is much to the point. The rich wife of a bishop had built a church, and superintended the decoration of the interior. To do this the better she sat in the church reading the legends of the saints, so as to explain to the painters what she wished to have represented. A poor person coming in to pray saw her sitting there, dressed in black and grey-headed, and took her for a beggar. He, therefore, put a loaf in her lap and passed on. She thanked him and kept the bread, and as long as it lasted she took a small portion of it as a blessing before every meal. 'Benedictionem ex eâ singulis diebus sumens donec expensa est.'—*Historia Francorum*, lib. ii. cap. xvii.

middle of the seventeenth century wrote,¹ 'The ancient Christians in receiving their guests or their friends offered a prayer; and it is most probable that they gave them the holy Body of Jesus Christ before they took their meal: for this was the gage of hospitality, and the sacrament of mutual friendship, and each Christian had the Eucharist in his house, at that time when, as St. John Chrysostom says, the private houses were as holy as churches were afterwards.' Nor, indeed, does our own countryman, the learned Cave, dissent from the idea that the Christians 'used before every meal to give some parts of the Holy Eucharist.'²

There is, therefore, very good *à priori* reason for supposing that the real rendering of the words *ante omnem cibum* is the natural one 'before every meal.'

There is also a chain of evidence, extending from early times, that the meals of Christians were regarded at all events as a quasi-religious service. That which at first was a religious act in itself was afterwards employed as a means of guiding, or checking, the not unusual temptation of eating or drinking to excess. The fact that the Blessed Sacrament was instituted at a meal has ever, as St. Basil points out, shed a solemnity over a Christian's meals. He is continually reminded, 'Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatever

¹ 'Certum est ex Homero adventante sive amico, sive hospite, domo eum acceptum fuisse cum libatione vini diis factâ, et porrecto illi poculo, cum verborum formulâ quâ felicem ei adventum optavere et ritu consimili discessuri hospites dimissi fuerunt, precantibus iis qui dimittebant ut cum Deo irent et prospero itinere uterentur. Et hæc sunt Philotesiæ subitanæ et extemporales. Consimile aliquid egere Christiani veteres: hospites aut amicos excipiebant præmissa ad Deum oratione, et Corpore Christi Sanctissimo *ante quemvis cibum* eos refecisse valde probabile est. Erat enim inter illos hospitalitatis tessera et amicitia mutua sacramentum, et quivis Christianis domi Eucharistiam habebat: eo scilicet tempore quo privata domus tam sancta quam postea Ecclesie fuerunt, ut ait Sanctus Chrysostomus.' (*Notæ Veterum: Epistola*, auctore R. P. Joanne Frontone, Canonico Regulari Sanctæ Genovefæ et Universitatis Parisiensis Cancellario, Parisiis, 1660, p. 6.) The *ante quemvis cibum* of Fronton is nearly akin to the *ante omnem cibum* of Tertullian.

² *Primitive Christianity*, by William Cave, D.D. part i. chap. xi. London, 1839, vol. i. p. 229.

ye do, do all to the glory of God.' Thus the old form of grace, which has been used for many centuries in the West, is a relic of this idea of the meal. The form is a short religious service in itself, and it *includes* the meal as part of the service. This must be obvious to all who use it, but for those to whom it may not be familiar, it may be well to describe it.

The service commences with a psalm and gloria, followed by the lesser litany and Lord's Prayer. The priest (if one be present) then blesses the food, after which a prayer is said, that all may partake of the heavenly table provided hereafter. At this point the meal follows, after which the service proceeds with a short psalm and gloria, a thanksgiving for the food received, three versicles and responses, and the concluding Apostolic benediction. Thus, from the opening psalm to the concluding prayer for blessing the whole is a religious service, of which the meal forms a part.¹

A very ancient, and at the same time a most interesting and beautiful blessing of the table has been preserved in a tract which is included amongst the works of St. Atha-

¹ Can there be any reference to such a custom in St. Basil? He says that, to make up the number seven for the daily prayers, the mid-day prayer must be divided into two parts, one before and the other after the mid-day meal. (*Sermo Asceticus*, § 4, *Opera*, Gaume, tom. ii. p. 450.) He grounds his rule for giving thanks (εὐχαριστῶν) before meat on the three texts, St. Matt. xiv. 19, Acts xxvii. 35, 1 Tim. iv. 4; in two of which there is most probably reference to the Holy Eucharist. (*Moralia*, Reg. lvi. tom. ii. p. 387; see also his Epistle to St. Gregory Nazianzene on the solitary life, *Epistola* ii. tom. iii. p. 105.) In the hymns of Prudentius, *Ante cibum* and *Post cibum*, there is scarcely so much reference to the Blessed Sacrament as we should expect. Some fancy a reference in the address to Christ as *Columba potens*, since the Eucharist was reserved in a dove-shaped vessel; but Tertullian applies the word to Christ, and, after having said 'Christum columba demonstrare solita est,' he speaks of 'nostræ columbæ domus,' that is, a Church. (*Adv. Valentin.* cap. iii. Paris, 1675, p. 251 A.) However, in the hymn *Post cibum*, Prudentius has a reference to the Sacrament (*Carmina*, Romæ, 1781, tom. i. p. 277), where the 'parcis victibus' is much to the purpose of this essay:—

'Parcis vietibus expedita corda
Infuerum melius Deum receptant,
Hinc pastus animæ est, saporque verus.'

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nasius.¹ It has been doubted, indeed, whether the treatise
itself is to be ascribed to the pen of St. Athanasius; but the
grace before meat has manifest tokens of antiquity. The
reference to the redintegration of the scattered dust of the
Christian dead in the Resurrection recalls the memory of
the times of martyrdom, when heathen unbelievers, thinking
to destroy the memory of the Saints, scattered their ashes
upon running water, that their surviving brethren might not
gather them as relics. The passage in St. Athanasius is as
follows :—

After the assembly at the ninth hour, eat your bread, giving
thanks (*εὐχαριστία*) over your table thus : 'Blessed be God, who
has mercy on us and nourishes us from our youth, who giveth
food to all flesh. Fill our hearts with joy and gladness, that al-
ways having all sufficiency we may abound to every good work in
Christ Jesus our Lord,² with whom glory, power, honour and
worship is due to Thee with the Holy Ghost for ever and ever.
Amen.' And then when you have sat down at the table and come
to break the bread, having sealed it thrice with the sign of the
cross, giving thanks (*εὐχαριστοῦσα*) say thus : 'We give thanks to
Thee, our Father, for Thy Holy Resurrection,³ for Thou hast made
it known to us by Thy Son Jesus : and just as this bread which is
on this table was scattered and having been brought together be-
came one : so let Thy Church be gathered from the ends of the
earth into Thy Kingdom, for Thine is the power and the glory for
ever and ever. Amen.' And this prayer you should say when you
break the bread and wish to eat : but when you have placed it on
the table and wish to sit down, say the 'Our Father' all through.
And we say the prayer above written, 'Blessed be God,' when
we have finished our meal and rise from the table.

This passage is very much to the purpose here, as
showing that the blessing of the meal had in the minds of

¹ *De Virginitate*, §§ 12 and 13; *Opera*, Parisiis, 1698, tom. ii. p. 117 A.
The grace after meat there given is not so much to our purpose.

² This passage is a quotation from the great intercessory prayer in the
anaphora of the Liturgy of St. Mark, in use at Alexandria, where St. Atha-
nasius was patriarch. Three texts are blended together—Ps. cxxxv. 25,
Acts xiv. 17, 2 Cor. ix. 8.

³ This probably means, 'the resurrection to life which Thou hast granted
us and made known to us by Thy Son.'

the Christians of the time some definite connection with the Holy Eucharist. That there was this connection is seen from three considerations: first, the blessing of the table is the breaking of the bread with prayer; secondly, there is an exquisite reference to the resurrection of the body; and, thirdly, not only does the Greek remind us of the Holy Eucharist, but a great part of the first prayer is taken from the intercessory prayer in the anaphora of the Liturgy of St. Mark.

First of all, it shows that the breaking of bread was the hallowing of the meal. This most probably was in memory of the most solemn 'breaking of bread' which of old blessed each Christian meal. It is quite true that this breaking of bread with prayer was the ancient Jewish form of hallowing a meal,¹ but there is clear evidence, as has been seen, that in Apostolic times the breaking of bread was with Christians a participation in the Eucharist. It is impossible to suppose that any Christian could break bread with prayer at the commencement of a meal without being irresistibly reminded of the Blessed Sacrament. As St. Basil has said, the Lord especially chose out the commonest articles of food to convey His grace, that all Christians should be reminded of Him and His Passion whenever they took their meals.

Secondly, in this form of grace there is a most remarkable and beautiful reference to the resurrection of the body. It is difficult to suppose that this reference would have been made had there not have been originally in the minds of the Christians who used it some connection with the Blessed Sacrament. The promise of a resurrection to life was intimately attached by our Blessed Lord to participation in the Eucharist;² and in a symbolism connected with this He likened Himself in His death, burial, and resurrection to a grain of wheat hidden in the ground to

¹ See Buxtorf's *Synagoga Judaica*, cap. xii. Basileæ, 1680, p. 242.

² St. John vi. 51-58.

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bring much fruit to life.¹ In the form of grace the symbolism would seem to have a double aspect, referring not only to the compacting of the body after the dust has been scattered, but to the Bread of Life, by participation in which scattered members are compacted into one body. Such had been the teaching of the Apostle in his application of the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist to the question of eating things offered to idols.² 'We being many,' he wrote, 'are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one Bread.'

That this symbolism was constantly present to the minds of the early Christians and was a consolation to them, may be seen from that exquisite saying of St. Ignatius as he went to martyrdom—a saying not unfrequently quoted in the early ages of Christianity:³ 'I am God's wheat, let me be ground by the teeth of wild beasts that I may be found pure bread of Christ.' Here there is a distinct connection between bread compacted from the dust of flour, and man's body compacted from the dust of death in the resurrection.

It may be that this is the real interpretation of the origin of the custom⁴ of the feasts at the tombs of the faithful departed. If the Blessed Sacrament was the pledge of the resurrection to life, and if in this connection of thought the blessing of a Christian feast had special reference to the resurrection of the body, there would be special appropriateness in Christians breaking bread, whether in the Eucharistic feast or otherwise, at the tomb of those

¹ St. John xii. 24.

² 1 Cor. x. 17.

³ Ignatii *Epistola ad Romanos*, cap. iv.; *Patres Apostolici*, ed. Hefele, 1855, p. 200. The passage is quoted by Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, lib. iii. cap. xxxvi.; and by St. Irenæus, *Adv. Hæreses*, lib. v. cap. xxviii.

⁴ This was a very early custom (*Constitutiones Apostolicae*, lib. viii. cap. xlv.), and had become so much abused that St. Ambrose stopped it at Milan, and St. Augustine strove against it at Hippo. (St. Augustine, *Confessiones*, lib. vi. cap. ii.; *Opera*, Parisiis, 1689, tom. i. col. 119; *Epistola* xxii. § 3, tom. ii. col. 28, &c.) See above, p. 54.

departed in the Communion of the Body and Blood of the Lord. Some have interpreted the hard saying of St. Paul, 'Why are they baptized *for* the dead?' as meaning that Baptism itself was a pledge of the resurrection to life.¹ So the Christian feast at the tomb of a saint might have been esteemed an act of faith in the resurrection.

The same connection of thought may help us to understand the somewhat hard saying of St. Cyprian, who speaking of the Blessed Sacrament says, 'We celebrate the Lord's Resurrection in the morning.'² Now the Apostle St. Paul speaks of the Holy Eucharist as being the means of 'showing forth the Lord's *Death* till He come;' how then does St. Cyprian speak of it as specially showing forth the Lord's *Resurrection*, more than any other of the great facts of our redemption? It may be that the idea of resurrection connected with bread compacted of the dust of flour was present to the mind of St. Cyprian when he used the expression; and therefore he spoke of the means whereby we participate in the hope of the resurrection as a celebration of the Lord's Resurrection, which was indeed the first-fruits and earnest of the harvest of mankind.

It is quite possible, too, that the same connection of thought may have combined with the greatness of the festival itself to give such pre-eminent importance to the Communion at Easter, the annual celebration of the Lord's Resurrection.

But, be this as it may, there can be little reason for doubting that the reference to the resurrection in this form of grace is indeed a reminiscence of the time when the table was blessed by participation in the Holy Eucharist.

If, however, there be any lingering doubt on this head, it must be removed by the third consideration, that the language used is Eucharistic. Not only does the word *εὐχαριστεῖν* constantly occur, but most of the first prayer is

¹ See Bishop Wordsworth's Commentary upon 1 Cor. xv. 29.

² Ep. lxiii. *Ad Cæcilium*, Parisiis, 1726, p. 109. See below, p. 227.

taken word for word from the Liturgy of St. Mark.¹ This is peculiarly interesting. Not only are the three passages of Scripture referred to in the same order and in the same form of words, but there is the same addition at the end.

<i>St. Athanasius.</i>		<i>Liturgy of St. Mark.</i>
Who giveth food to all flesh.	Ps. cxxxv. 25.	Who giveth food to all flesh.
Fill our hearts with joy and gladness, that always having all sufficiency, we may abound to every good work in Christ Jesus our Lord.	Acts xiv. 17. 2 Cor. ix. 8.	Fill our hearts with joy and gladness, that always having all sufficiency, we may abound to every good work in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Where the text differs from the Greek Vulgate, there the form of grace and the Liturgy of St. Mark agree.

It is certainly in favour of the Athanasian origin of the form of grace that the prayer said before and after the meal should be mainly taken from the Liturgy in use at Alexandria, of which St. Athanasius was patriarch.

There is one more point of interest to be mentioned, and that is that the passage is quoted from the great intercessory prayer, which in St. Mark's Liturgy comes just *before*, and not, as usual in the East, *after*, the consecration. This again would show the intimate connection of thought between the breaking of bread at table and the consecration of the Bread of Life. At the table, as well as at the Altar, this passage is used before the prayer at the breaking of bread.

From these considerations it may be seen that this most ancient form of blessing the meal has a distinct reference to the Blessed Sacrament; and is probably a reminiscence of the early times of evangelic earnestness, when each meal was hallowed by participation in the Holy Eucharist.

That there was some form in use amongst Christians in

¹ See Neale's *Primitive Liturgies*, in Greek, 1859, p. 20; the same in English, p. 17. Bishop Brett's *Collection of Liturgies*, 1720, p. 32.

the East in early times is clear from the constant reference to it made by St. Chrysostom: 'Just as the devil lays many snares in feasts, having as his allies drunkenness, and gluttony, and unrestrained laughter, and an uncollected mind; so then should we especially raise against him before and after meat the fortress of psalms, and we should rise from the feast in common with wife and children, and sing holy hymns to God.' Indeed, he goes on to speak of the particular verse of the psalm, which was probably sung after meat in his day: 'Just as some rich men fill a sponge with balsam, and wipe down their tables, that if there be any mess from the food when this is drawn over, it may show a clean table; so in very truth let us also do, filling our mouths with spiritual melody instead of balsam, so that, if there

¹ *Expositio in Psalmum xli. Opera*, Parisiis, tom. v. p. 132 c. So also, in his Second Homily *De Annd*, St. Chrysostom urges her example as one most worthy to be followed: 'A meal that begins with prayer and ends with prayer will never fall short, but more abundant than a fountain will bring us all things good. . . . For where there is prayer and thanksgiving there comes the grace of the Holy Spirit, and devils are scared and every power of the enemy flies and departs. . . . We ought, when we begin and when we leave off, to thank God, for then most certainly we shall not easily fall into drunkenness if we have settled into this habit. And so, whether you have eaten or drunk too much, when you rise do not even then give over the habit; yea, though we can scarce hold up our head, though we be staggering and tumbling, let us even so pray and not give up the habit. For if on one day you shall have prayed in this fashion, you will on the next correct the shame that occurred the day before.' (*Hom. ii. De Annd*, § 5, Parisiis, tom. iv. p. 719 B, C, D.) Compare *De Baptismo Christi* ad fin., tom. ii. p. 375 B. In *Matt. Hom. lxxxii.* (al. 83), tom. vii. p. 784 B. The French divine Jean Fronteau, just quoted, writes of the early Christians: 'Ante prandium preces ad Deum fusæ, et laudes ei dicte tanquam auctori omnium bonorum, ut docet Clemens Alexandrinus. Cibos a Deo benedicti petierunt, ita ut pane suo quotidiano tanquam sancto usi sint, nec sine religione illum tractaverint.' (*Familia Christiana: Epistola*, Parisiis, 1661.) Tertullian speaks of the care of the Christians lest any bread should fall to the ground: 'Calicis aut panis etiam nostri aliquid decuti in terra anxie patimur.' Rigault's comment is, 'panis etiam non Eucharistici, sed etiam profani.' (*De Coronâ*, iii. *Opera*, Parisiis, 1675, p. 102 A.) This the Christians learned from the Jews, who were very particular in this respect. See Buxtorf's *Synagoga Judaica*, cap. xii. Basileæ, 1680, p. 248. Tertullian also tells us that the *agape* commenced with prayer: 'Non prius discumbitur, quàm oratio ad Deum præstetur.' (*Apologeticus*, xxxix. *Opera*, p. 32 B.) May we not see a reference to a reception of the Reserved Sacrament in the *præstetur*?

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have been any defilement in the soul from gluttony, we may wipe it off with this melody; and let us say, standing together, "Thou hast made me glad, O Lord, through Thy works, and I will rejoice in giving praise for the operation of Thy hands." And let prayer be added after the psalmody, so that we may hallow the house itself together with the soul.' Here, then, is distinct reference to a psalm and prayer, as accompanying a meal before and after, so as to cast a religious aspect over the whole.

The same is seen in the custom, which has prevailed from early times, of a meal being accompanied with some religious reading. Thus, in the sixth century, St. Gregory of Tours tells us that this was not unusual: 'On a certain day being invited to his table, while we were sitting together, he specially asked that something might be read for the instruction of his soul; and I, having opened the Book of Solomon, pitched upon the first verse that met my eye.' This, which was edifying and desirable for all, especially in those great feasts which were often very long and tedious, was later on³ insisted upon at the tables of bishops, and in monasteries. Somewhat of this has lingered on to our own times, not only in the annual reading of Scripture at the feast at Eton, but in a strange and edifying ceremony with which the dinner used till very lately to conclude in one of our Inns of Court.

¹ *Historia Francorum*, lib. v. cap. xiv.; *Opera*, Paris, 1699, col. 216, Paris, 1561, p. 234. St. Gregory also tells us that at a feast the king bade him make his deacon sing; and then each priest sang a psalm before the king (*Hist. lib. viii. cap. iii. 1561, p. 432, 1699, col. 378*). So it is recorded that at an installation feast of a Bishop of Salisbury certain priest vicars sang an anthem before the new-made Bishop.

² Co. Bracar. II. (A.D. 572), can. lxx.: 'Non oportet aliquando clericos nisi hymno dicto edere panem, et post cibos gratias auctori deo referre.' (Bruns, ii. p. 55.) Co. Rhemense (A.D. 813), can. xvii.: 'Episcopi et Abbates ante joca turpia facere non permittant sed pauperes et indigentes secum ad mensam habeant, et lectio divina ibi personet, et sumant cibum cum benedictione et laude Domini.' (Carranza, p. 566.) Co. Toletan III. (A.D. 589), can. vii.: 'In omni sacerdotali convivio lectio Scripturarum divinarum misceatur.' (Bruns, i. p. 214.) Durandus has a chapter on the subject, *De Concilio Celebrando*, pars iii. tit. v. Parisiis, 1545, p. 169.

At 'the Ancient and Honourable Society of Clifford's Inn' the grace after meat is offered by the head of the lower table. It consists in his raising above his head three times, and striking gently on the table three times, four small loaves attached to each other in baking, so as to form a cross, somewhat after the fashion of the rolls in Germany and Switzerland. It is understood that the three raisings and knockings are in reference to the ever-blessed Trinity, in whose Name the rite is performed. The loaves are then pushed from the head along the table, and off the lower end, to indicate that all that is left is to go to those who want. 'A good old practice,' adds my informant, 'which has yielded to the ultra-Protestantism of the present day.' The custom no doubt comes down from the times when the ritualistic black patch in the wig really covered the tonsure of the priest. No words are now used, for the officiant is now a layman.

In perfect harmony with this argument is the fact, that in mediæval art the representation of the historic scene of the Institution of the Eucharist always had its place, as is the case with the marvellous fresco of Leonardo da Vinci at Milan, in the *refectory*; and not, as is so common in modern churches in England, over the altar. This would hardly have seemed natural had there not been a traditional connection with a time when each meal was hallowed by a remembrance of the Sacrament.

There is, then, much to persuade us that the *ante omnem cibum* of Tertullian means 'before every meal:' and, indeed, this is the most natural meaning of the words. For there is no one word which expressed the same as our modern English word¹ 'meal,' unless it be *cibus*. The

¹ Du Cange gives many instances of this use of the word, such even as 'duos cibos,' two meals; and St. Isidore of Seville (about A.D. 600), in his *Origines*, often uses the word where we should use 'meal.' Thus in his chapter 'De Escis,' he has, 'Jentaculum est primus *cibus*—veteres prandium vocabant omnium militum *cibum* ante pugnam. Merenda est *cibus* qui declinante die sumitur. Est autem cœna vespertinus *cibus*.'—*Origines*, lib. xx. cap. ii.; *Opera*, Coloniae Agrippæ, 1617, p. 172 G and H.

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rendering, therefore, of the passage would have been 'before every meal,' had not others occupied the ground with the bald meaning 'before all food,' as if it was meant to exclude any taking of food previously from the midnight next preceding.

Now, no one would have us believe that if the primitive Christians, in their evangelic piety, blessed their simple meals with the previous partaking of the Blessed Sacrament, we are therefore bound now to follow their example. If, therefore, the passage does not affect us otherwise than historically in its obvious and natural sense, why should it be supposed to bind us in its constrained and unlikely meaning?

Indeed, if we translate this passage 'before every meal,' it helps us perhaps to understand another saying of Tertullian, which certainly requires something to help it to be understood by modern ears. This saying has been hardly dealt by; for, in the effort to make it intelligible, some writers omit some of the words, while others curtail it in a different fashion, each endeavouring to assimilate the passage to his own meaning.

Our own Bishop Fell¹ (and Cave² agrees with him) evidently thinks the passage is in favour of a practice of reception after food. In a note upon St. Cyprian, he writes, 'It is clear that the Eucharist, though taken at early dawn, was also distributed at evening, of which Tertullian is a trustworthy witness. "We take the Sacrament of the Eucharist at meal time from the hand of the presidents;" and elsewhere he tells us it is taken at the close of the stations. The custom of communicating after Supper lasted a long time in the Church.'

The passage has been carefully translated in Clark's 'Ante-Nicene Library;' and after attentive examination

¹ *S. Cypriani Opera*, Oxonii, 1682, Epistolæ, p. 156. The note of Bishop Fell is upon Epist. lxiii.

² *Primitive Christianity*, part i. chap. xi. London, 1839, vol. i. p. 231.

it will probably be found that this is the true rendering :—

We take also in meetings before daybreak, and from the hand of none but the president, the Sacrament of the Eucharist, which the Lord both commanded to be eaten at meal times, and enjoined to be taken by all alike.

Here is precisely what the former passage has been telling us, according to my argument. Whether we take Bishop Fell's abbreviated statement, or the other translation at length, it is asserted that the Blessed Sacrament was either taken or commanded to be taken at meal time. Does not this throw light upon, and receive light from, the habit of some receiving privately in their own homes the Reserved Sacrament *ante omnem cibum*, 'before every meal?' That such is probably the case is rendered apparent from a consideration of the argument of the context of this second passage.

For Tertullian is referring to the various points in which the custom of his day had deviated from the *lex scripta* of the Gospels. He is arguing in defence of a soldier who had refused to wear a chaplet given him at the distribution of the imperial largess. The Catholics had condemned the soldier as unnecessarily attracting attention and inviting martyrdom by refusing to do what Scripture had not condemned. Tertullian glories in the soldier's act, and says that this appeal to Scripture is unwise, since Scriptural injunction could not be pleaded for many customs which obtained in his days. The Catholics could have easily answered this argument, but that is not to our present purpose. Tertullian enumerates customs connected with Baptism, &c., for which he says there were no Scriptural grounds. Here, then, was a wonderful opportunity for the introduction of Fasting Communion as a remarkable deviation from the Institution; and if it was not only a custom in his days, but as important a custom as some would have

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us believe, it must have been introduced. Let us see if it is to be found in the passage. The context is given in as literal a translation as possible: ¹—

In a word, to begin with Baptism. As we are about to enter the water, in the very same place but a little before in the church, under the hand of the Bishop, we testify that we renounce the devil and his pomp and angels. Then we are dipped three times, making a somewhat fuller answer than the Lord appointed in the Gospel. Thence being taken up we taste a mixture of milk and honey, and from that day we refrain from the daily bath for a whole week. The Sacrament of the Eucharist commanded by the Lord, both at meal time and to all, we take even in antelucan meetings, nor from the hand of others than the Bishop.

It is very difficult to see what deviation from the Institution there is in receiving only from the hands of the Bishops. Tertullian cannot possibly mean that none might communicate except from the hand of the Bishop, since he contemplates his wife communicating herself, and others also reserving the Communion for home reception later on in the day. He can only mean that in his day none but the Bishop himself *consecrated* the Sacrament. That this was usually the case we learn from other sources, as Fleury tells us: 'Il n'y avoit qu'un sacrifice dans chaque Église, c'est-à-dire dans chaque diocèse. C'étoit l'Évêque qui l'offroit, et les Prêtres ne le faisoient qu'au défaut de l'Évêque, absent ou malade.'

But he cannot mean that the only time that they received the Communion was in the meetings before daybreak—nay this he points out by the '*etiam*,' we receive it *even* then, which distinctly implies reception at other times. For if this were the only time of reception, and it were the rule to receive only when no food had been taken

¹ *De Coronâ Militis*, cap. iii. Parisiis, 1675, p. 102. Krazer (*De Liturgiis*, 1786, p. 656) argues from this passage that the times of celebration were morning and evening.

² *Mœurs des Chrétiens*, § xiv. *Opuscules*, Nismes, 1780, tom. i. p. 161. In the English translation, London, 1698, p. 82.

since midnight, Tertullian certainly missed a striking deviation from Gospel precedent in not saying so. But we indeed know from elsewhere in his writings that men received indeed from the hands of the Bishops, but would reserve Communion till later in the day. It would seem as if the argument in his mind was, The Lord commanded it to be taken at meal times, and it is true we do communicate at such times; but we deviate from this, for we even communicate before dawn. And when we do so, we receive at the hands only of the Bishop, though the attendant priests are there with him: yet the Lord (who in this assembly is represented by the Bishop) bade all the Apostles (here represented by the priests) to offer.

The inference from this passage, then, is that there was at least no stress laid upon Fasting Communion. They communicated indeed before dawn sometimes, but it was because the assembly was then held either from present fear of persecution, or in memory of past fear. There was no idea of necessarily communicating before any food in the day was taken, for then Tertullian would certainly have made a strong point of this. But the only deviation from Gospel precedent on this head that he can discover in the customs of his own day about communicating, is that it is 'even in meetings before dawn,' not always, or always without having touched food since midnight.

The same also is seen in St. Cyprian, as will be found in the chapter on his testimony. He condemns the Aquarii for offering in the morning water only; he does not condemn them for offering at supper time in the mixed chalice. This, as Bingham¹ has well observed, manifests 'that in Cyprian's time there was no absolute rule to forbid communicating after supper.'

But here perhaps the objection will arise that this

¹ *Antiquities*, bk. xv. chap. vii. § 8, Bohn's edition, 1856, vol. ii. p. 833. See below, p. 229.

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edition, 1856, vol. ii. p.

interpretation of Tertullian is antagonistic to the rule that none should communicate more than once in a day. With such a rule I have great sympathy; and fifteen years ago I made application to one, who has since been advanced to a foremost position in the Church, for a reference to the canons which forbade this, in order to convince a junior of his error. The answer obtained ran thus: 'There are ancient canons against communicating twice in a day. Those who wish to be true to the primitive Church will respect them;' but there were no references given, nor indeed have I ever been able to find any. It is dangerous to map out the canons of the primitive Church by our own instinctive feelings of reverence, however trustworthy they seem to ourselves. The only reference given by Biel¹ on the question of communicating more than once in a day is to a decision of Pope Alexander II., in the eleventh century, forbidding priests to consecrate twice without necessity.

In primitive times there was only one celebration at the one altar in the church; but liberty was given to each Christian, as it would seem, to reserve as much as he pleased for his own devotional reception when there was deficiency of celebrations. Now, since it was the common custom to have one only celebration on a day, this would hardly have been broken through had there not existed the habit of frequent reception in the same day. When Walafrid Strabo tells us, in the ninth century, that Pope Leo III. consecrated often seven or nine times in a day, it is clear from the context that this was from devotion, and not from necessity. For Walafrid ends his discussion,² 'therefore let each man be rich in his own opinion, so long as there is agreement of faith, so that they who offer often think not that God cannot otherwise hear petitions, nor they who offer only once suppose that the subtilty of their

¹ *De Canone Missæ*, lectio lxxxvii. lit. B, Lugduni, 1542, fo. 236.

² *De Rebus Ecclesiasticis*, cap. xxi. ed. Hittorpius, Romæ, 1591, p. 345.

faith is more acceptable in the sight of God than the *devotion* of their betters.' It is manifest, therefore, that Walafrid regarded frequent celebration as a devotional act, though seemingly he did not quite agree with it. But when that which was introduced from devotion became extended from the cupidity of priests, who wished to receive money for saying many masses on the same day, it was forbidden¹ to say more than one mass, except on grave necessity. Probably the habit of multiplying celebrations from deep feeling of devotion would not have been introduced had there not already existed a habit of communicating more than once in the same day from the reserved Sacrament.

Tertullian, therefore, most probably teaches us that in his day there existed still the most blessed custom of consecrating each meal by a previous reception of the reserved Eucharist, though sometimes they communicated 'even in their assemblies before dawn.' Neither in his days, nor in those of St. Cyprian, had the general relaxation of morals commenced, which arose partly from the removal of the fear of imminent death from persecution, partly from the influx of political Christians into the Church, consequent upon the conversion of the Emperor and his Court.

I conclude that Tertullian cannot be cited with any justice in favour even of a habit, much less of a paramount rule, of always taking the Blessed Sacrament before any food taken since the midnight next preceding.

¹ 'Sufficit sacerdoti unam missam in die una celebrare: quia Christus semel passus est, et totum mundum redemit. . . . Qui vero pro pecuniis, aut adulationibus secularium, unâ die præsumunt plures facere missas, non æstimo evadere damnationem.' (Pope Alexander II. (Pope A.D. 1061-73) in *Decreto de Consec.* dist. i. cap. liii.) In England more celebrations than one (except on Christmas Day, Easter Day, and unforeseen necessity) were forbidden to priests at the Council at Westminster under Archbishop Hubert, A.D. 1200. See Collier's *Ecclesiastical History*, bk. v. cent. xiii. Straker, 1840, vol. ii. p. 411; and again at Oxford under Archbishop Stephen Langton, in A.D. 1222, Lyndwood, *Provinciale*, lib. iii. tit. xxiii., Oxford, 1679, p. 227.

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CHAPTER IV.

ST. CYPRIAN. A.D. 250.

THE testimony of St. Cyprian would certainly seem to be that in his day there was no strict rule of Fasting Communion.¹ The rule that was afterwards formulated at the Council of Hippo does not seem to have been regarded as binding in his day. If such a rule were known to be binding, there can be little question that St. Cyprian would have adduced it in his argument against the curious conceit of some whom we must call the Aquarii of his time. These men seem to have had the notion that celebrations in the morning should be with water only, without wine, and that the mixed chalice should be offered only in the evening after supper. St. Cyprian says in effect that this was in simplicity, and not in wilful error; but he does not tell us the grounds of their peculiar view. He suggests, indeed, that perhaps they 'feared, in the morning sacrifices, lest by the savour of wine they should be redolent of the Blood of Christ;' but he does not say what was the origin or ground of this fear. It is quite true that in some manuscripts the passage is paraphrased in such a way as to imply that it was fear of persecution: 'Lest any should fear to offer wine, lest in the morning hours, through the savour of the wine, its smell should be by its fragrant odour recognized by the perception of unbelievers, and he should be known to be a Christian, since we commemorate the Blood of Christ in the oblation of wine.' But this passage

¹ Yet the passage here argued from is referred to as upholding the natural fast from midnight before Communion; cf. Cozza, *Tractatus de Jejunio Ecclesiastico*, Romæ, 1724, p. 2.

is probably the marginal explanation of a scribe, which has gradually usurped a place in the text of St. Cyprian. There is another possible explanation of this fear, and that is that the *Aquarii* were ascetics, who, from a mistaken view of discipline, rejected wine in the morning as breaking their fast, but had no objection to it in the evening at the conclusion of their discipline. In England, in our own day, the ministers of some Dissenting chapels, where the teaching of teetotalism is upheld, have been known to celebrate what they call the Lord's Supper in bread and water. But a curious instance of mistaken sense of reverence is to be found in the suggestion of a vicar of Dudley, about fifty years ago. In a pamphlet upon advisable alterations in the Book of Common Prayer, he suggested the propriety of celebrating on Good Friday with bread and water. He said that there was a natural feeling against taking wine upon so solemn a fast, and yet to his mind some memorial of the Great Sacrifice was of the highest desirability; he therefore pleaded that it would be very appropriate to celebrate with bread and water!

But whatever was the real foundation of the conceit of these *Aquarii*, their peculiarity is not so much to our present purpose as the answer of St. Cyprian. He points out that the custom of the Church has ever been to use the mixed chalice, and that he himself had received a divine admonition that this was the only way of celebrating the Eucharist. He shows how in prophecy and type wine was ever ascribed to the Eucharist, while water prefigured the Sacrament of Baptism. He then, towards the end of the letter, inserts some objections or arguments of those against whom he is contending, and he gives his own answer to these objections. But when he records the objection about offering after supper, he says not one word about any custom of Fasting Communion, though it would have been much to his purpose; he says nothing about any Apostolic rule, or Divine command on this head, but he gives two

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reasons of a much less conclusive character. He says that the mass of the people could not so well be brought together in the evening as in the morning; and he says that they celebrate the Lord's Resurrection in the morning.

This latter reason will at first sight seem remarkable, since the especial mystery of our redemption, commemorated in the Eucharist, is the Sacrifice of the Lord's Death, which we therein show forth till He comes. But it shows that this 'worship of the dispensation' included all the mysteries of the Incarnation, and was a thanksgiving for all.¹ As, therefore, the service itself, the Breaking of the Bread, the Shedding forth of the Wine, was a commemoration of the Lord's Death, so St. Cyprian seems to say that the time of offering it was commemorative of the Resurrection of the Lord in the morning.

But, if there had been in St. Cyprian's day a rule at all similar to that in use amongst Roman Catholics now, he would not have used any such minor arguments to answer

¹ It may perhaps be that St. Cyprian is contrasting the death of the world to Christ and all Christians, with the Resurrection of Christ and the rising again of all Christians with Him in their Baptism. But it also may be that St. Cyprian is here asserting that the Resurrection is one of the mysteries of the Dispensation, which is recognized and commemorated in the chief act of worship of the Christian Church. In early liturgies this was marked; it is seen in the Western Litany, which is doubtless Eucharistic. (See Freeman's *Principles of Divine Service*, vol. ii. p. 324 seq.) It is specially commemorated in the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, in the Consecration Prayer: 'Remembering, therefore, this command of our Saviour, and all things which He did for us: His cross, His burial, His resurrection the third day, His ascension into Heaven,' &c. (King's *Rites and Ceremonies of Greek Church*, London, 1772, p. 170; Neale's *Tetralogia Liturgica*, p. 136.) Also it is one of the nine points of the Dispensation commemorated in the nine portions consecrated in the Mozarabic and Coptic rites. (Freeman's *Principles*, vol. ii. p. 328; Krazer, *De Liturgiis*, 1786, p. 618.) See also above, p. 214. It may, however, only be a poetical expression, as in the following explanation of a passage in the seventh Homily of St. Cæsarius: 'Sed quem imminentis passionis mæstus angor consecrat jucundior Resurrectionis hilaritas quodammodo consecrare dicitur "Jam tunc Christus ab Ecclesiâ, cui Dominicum Corpus Resurrectione consecravit, recipiendus ostenditur."—*De Benedictionibus Patriarcharum*, Auctore D. de Celada, Lugduni, 1647, p. 391.

this view of the Aquarii; he would perchance have used some such language as that of Mr. Oxenham, that such a practice 'was what God had forbidden, a service, we have great reason to fear, He will never accept.'

St. Cyprian, then, may be claimed as a witness against modern rigorists. His testimony, negative as it is, is in perfect harmony with that of canons and fathers elsewhere, and goes to show that Fasting Communion was not known as a rule until the end of the fourth century, when it was necessitated by the prevalent custom of taking food to excess.

The passage in St. Cyprian runs as follows: ¹—

All the discipline of religion and truth is overthrown, unless what is spiritually enjoined is faithfully preserved; unless, indeed, anyone should fear in the morning sacrifices lest, by the savour of wine, he should be redolent of the Blood of Christ. Thus, then, the brotherhood is beginning to be kept back even from the Passion of Christ in persecution, while they learn in the oblations to be ashamed of His Blood and Bloodshedding. The Lord, moreover, says in the Gospel: *Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed*; and the Apostle also speaks, saying: *If I pleased men I should not be the Servant of Christ*. But how can we shed our blood for Christ, if we are ashamed to drink the Blood of Christ?

[Then the Aquarii answer this earnest admonition :- -]

Does anyone flatter himself with this consideration, that though in the morning it appears that the oblation is made in water only, yet when we come to supper we offer the mixed chalice?

[To this pleading St. Cyprian answers warily :—]

Well, but when we sup we cannot call² together our people to the feast, so that we may celebrate the verity of the Sacrament in the presence of the whole brotherhood.

¹ Ep. lxiii. *Ad Cacilius*, Parisiis, 1726, p. 109.

² It is inconceivable that St. Cyprian should have brought forward this argument of inconvenience, if there had been an obligatory custom in his time of Fasting Communion of the same kind as we find in transmarine office books.

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[The Aquarii have their defence from our Lord's own example :—]

Well, but then the Lord offered not the mixed chalice in the morning, but after supper.

[St. Cyprian answers :—]

Must we, then, celebrate that of the Lord after supper, that so we may offer the mixed chalice by multiplying¹ Sacraments? It behoved Christ to offer about the evening of the day, that the very hour of the Sacrifice might show the setting and evening of the world; ² as it is written in Exodus, *And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening*; and again in the Psalms, *Let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice*. But we celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord in the morning; and because we make mention of His Passion in all Sacrifices (for the Lord's Passion is the Sacrifice we offer), we ought to do nothing else than what He did.

Having given this passage at length from St. Cyprian, there only remains to give the comment of the learned Bingham upon it.³ 'Cyprian' (he says), 'disputing against the Aquarians, who celebrated in the morning in water only, and in the evening in wine and water mixed together, does not contend with them about celebrating after supper, but only because they did not at both times mix wine with water, after Christ's example. He would not so easily have passed over the practice of the Aquarians in celebrating in the evening, had there been no instances of the like practices in the Church; but, as it was customary in Egypt to celebrate the Eucharist on Saturdays after dinner, and in Africa one day in a year after supper, all he pleads for

¹ It would be inconvenient or needless, he argues, to offer in the morning and also in the evening.

² This may, perhaps, mean the death of the world to Christ and Christians: therefore, there is the contrast of celebrating in the morning the Resurrection of Christ and Christians with and in Him. But the Resurrection is one of the nine points of the Dispensation commemorated in the Oblation, and the name of one of the nine portions in the Mozarabic and Coptic rites. See above, p. 227, and also p. 214.

³ *Antiquities*, bk. xv. chap. vii. § 8. Bohn's Edition, 1856, tom. ii. p. 833.

upon this point is only this, that the general custom of the Church to celebrate the Eucharist in the morning only was not against the rule of Christ, though He gave it in the evening after supper, because Christ had a particular reason for what He did, which He did not intend should oblige the Church : Christ offered in the evening to signify the evening or end of the world ; but we offer in the morning to celebrate our Saviour's Resurrection. And he gives another reason why they did not celebrate in the evening generally, as in the morning, because the people could not so well all come together in the evening as in the morning. By which it is plain in Cyprian's time there was no absolute rule to forbid communicating after supper, though the practice began generally to be disused, and the common custom was to receive fasting, and at morning service.' There does not seem much to be added to this argument of Bingham.

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CHAPTER V.

ST. GREGORY NAZIANZENE. A.D. 370.

A PASSAGE from St. Gregory Nazianzene has been quoted in favour of Fasting Communion, but he only says that in his day they celebrated 'before supper.' As this might be said of any mid-day celebration in our own day, it will not detain us long. The whole context of the passage¹ is given that there may be no mistake as to the citation.

But what need is there, when you are following examples that are beyond you, that you should be badly advised? since also many other things of those which are there recorded are manifestly different from what they are now, and not suitable to our times. For example, just before His temptation He fasted; so do we before Easter. The matter of the fast is one, but the difference of the two times is not small. For He opposed these fasts against His Temptation, but with us it signifies the dying with Christ, and is a purification before a feast. And He fasted forty days, for He was God; but we accommodated this to our power, though zeal persuades some even to be eager beyond their strength. Again, He celebrates the mystery of the Passover with His disciples in an upper chamber, and after supper, and the day before the Passion; but we in houses of prayer, and *before supper*, and after His Resurrection. He rose again on the third day, we after a long time.

It is quite true that Nicetas² explains this 'before

¹ Oratio xl. *In Sanctum Baptisma, Opera*, Parisiis, 1609, tom. i. p. 659.

² 'Consimili enim ratione discipulis post ctenam ante unicum passionis diem Christus Pascha tradidit ut nos in sacris domibus *et jejuni*, et post reditum Christi ad vitam, illud celebamus.' (St. Greg. Naz. *Opera*, Parisiis, 1609, tom. ii. col. 1069.) Nicetas lived at Constantinople in the eleventh century, some

supper' of fasting; but probably the *jejunium natura*, the fast from midnight, was unknown to Nicetas. At all events, it would seem to imply that men must be driven to straits for authority who can argue that, because St. Gregory here says that ordinarily the celebrations in his day were before supper, therefore it was held to be forbidden to take any food, or even wash out the mouth, between midnight and the act of celebration and Communion. If such custom had been known to him, it would have been very much to his purpose to say, 'we celebrate not only before supper, but before we take any food in the day.' But as he does not say this, we can hardly suppose that such a stringent custom was known to him.

seven hundred years after St. Gregory, and probably interpreted according to the practice in his day. The author of an article in the *Christian Remembrancer* for July 1860 (vol. xI. p. 194) thinks that the phrase 'after His Resurrection' 'probably refers to the fact of the celebration being in the morning, after the hour at which our Lord rose from the grave.' I venture to think that this is a heavy strain to put upon the words; and it seems hard to suppose that there is anything more intended than an antithesis to 'the day before His Passion.'

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CHAPTER VI.

ST. BASIL. A.D. 370.

THERE are two passages referred to, or quoted from, St. Basil's writings in favour of the fast from mid-night before Communion. The first, which is referred to by Giustiniani¹ in his Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles, is here given at length, for it is uncertain what particular part of the Epistle, to which reference is made, is intended to bear the sense for which it is cited. Certain it is that, from beginning to end, there is no word of Fasting Communion, and it is not easy to see why it is quoted. It may have been that Giustiniani had the reference attached to some other question about Communion, and it slipped in by accident; or it may be that some assertion of Fasting Communion may be supposed to lie hid in the statement that the monks and hermits partook of the reserved Sacrament. As, however, Giustiniani is content with a marginal reference to the letter of St. Basil,² it is not easy to see why he makes the reference at all; and the whole letter is given at length, as it is not very long, that the reader may judge for himself. It is only an instance of the manner in which quotations are multiplied without much care as to whether they are to the question or not:—

Daily Communion and partaking of the holy Body and Blood of Christ is good and very advantageous, since He Himself clearly

¹ In 1 Cor. xi. 26. B. Justiniani *In omnes B. Pauli Epistolas Expositiones*, Lugduni, 1612, tom. i. p. 561.

² *Ad Casarium Patriciam*, Ep. xciii. (al. 289), ed. Gaume, tom. iii. p. 267.

says, *He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath eternal life.* For who doubts that to be continually partaking of life is nothing else than to be living in many ways? We indeed communicate four times a week, on Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, and on other days if there be a commemoration of any saint. It is superfluous to show that it is in no way a great offence for a man to be compelled, in the times of persecution, to receive the Communion with his own hand, in the absence of priest or deacon, for long custom has established this by this very practice. For all the monks in the deserts, where there is no priest, retaining the Communion at home, receive from themselves. Again, in Alexandria and in Egypt each, even of those who live amongst the people (as is done for the most part), has the Communion at home, and receives at his own hands whenever he likes. For when once the priest has completed the Sacrifice and given it, he that receives it, say the whole of it at once, if he partake daily, should believe that he partakes and receives at the hands of him that originally gave it. For also in church the priest gives the portion, and he that receives it holds it fast with all authority, and thus conveys to his mouth with his own hand.¹ It is, then, virtually

¹ The Benedictine editors point out that this was not permitted by Theodore of the Studium, who says that the hand should be covered by a linen veil. But Theodore died (A.D. 826) some five hundred years later than St. Basil, and in the meantime a spurious sense of modesty had come over men's minds. When Nicetius of Lyons, in the sixth century, blessed Gregory of Tours as a little child, he covered himself with a veil in token of modesty, lest he should touch the child even with the tips of his fingers. (St. Greg. Turon. *Vita Patrum*, cap. viii. § 2, Paris, 1699, col. 1185.) About that time it was that the Council of Auxerre (in A.D. 580) determined, 'No woman may receive the Eucharist with uncovered hand' (can. xxxvi. Bruns, ii. p. 241), or without her 'dominicale,' that is supposed to have been a veil. Carranza (*Summa*, p. 376) has a note and a quotation from St. Augustine (which is really from St. Caesarius of Arles, A.D. 502, in *App. ad Opera St. Aug.* Sermo ccxxix. Parisiis, tom. v. p. 2, col. 376): 'Quid per dominicalem intelligi debeat, accipe ex St. Augustino qui de hoc agit in Sermonem 152 [leg. 252] de tempore ubi ait "omnes viri quando communicare desiderant lavent manus, et omnes mulieres nitida exhibeant linteamina, ubi Corpus Christi accipiant, &c." But it is hardly likely that the fathers at Auxerre would speak of the 'nuda manu' in can. xxxvi., and the 'dominicale' in can. xxxix., if they referred to the same thing. Indeed, in one ancient MS. of the Canons, the dominicale is definitely interpreted of the veil over the head. 'Si mulier communicans dominicale suum super caput suum non habuerit, usque ad alium diem,' &c.—See Le Brun, *Explication de la Messe*, diss. xv. part. iii. art. 5, Paris, 1726, tom. iv. p. 247. See also Sala's note on Bona, tom. iii. p. 372. The Italian women in some parts to this day spread a white linen veil or mantle over the head when they come to communicate. The clean white handkerchief that

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the same whether a man receive one portion from the priest or many portions at once.

This is the whole of the letter that has been preserved to our times, from the beginning to the end; and interesting though it certainly is, there is not, so far as I can see, one word to justify its being alleged in favour of Fasting Communion.

Nor indeed is there much better reason to allege the second passage, as is commonly done. For we must always remember that when men speak of Fasting Communion now-a-days, they expressly declare that the fasting is not the ecclesiastical discipline for the sake of purging the soul by mortification, but it is 'a symbolic fast, beginning with a symbolic day,' or what has been called, since the thirteenth century, 'jejunium naturæ.' To such a fast there is no reference in St. Basil.

The second passage has been quoted over and over again for the last two hundred years, so that we know the precise passage which is supposed to speak of the 'natural' fast. The passage is from the first Homily on Fasting. This homily was written to allure and persuade men to the proper keeping of the Lenten Fast. This is seen in the reference at the end to Easter and Good Friday; so that, if the homily were not to persuade men to the keeping of the whole period of Lent, at least it was to the keeping of Holy Week. The whole homily speaks of the advantage of fasting in every way, and the necessity of it for everyone. The saintly orator condescends to the lowest and minutest motives to catch the reluctant and luxurious, as well as employs higher and grander motives to encourage the eager and religious. Just as our homilies speak of the encouragement given to fishermen by the eating fish on fasting days, in order to persuade politic men to fast; so does St. Basil say that dainties will taste very much better peasant women take to church with them in England probably has the same origin.

after a course of fasting, and be not so likely to pall on the palate, in order to entrap the luxurious and effeminate. He speaks throughout of the habit of fasting, and he shows from Old and New Testament, that those who pleased God best, and were most accepted of Him, were men of spare and fasting habit. From beginning to end there is not one word of any distinction, such as men now-a-days would make at the outset of their treatise on the subject, between the ecclesiastical and natural fast.¹ With St. Basil, abstinence for the sake of discipline, or self-restraint from any particular kind of food, was a fast. Adam and Eve, he says, fasted in Paradise: this is what Tertullian and others had said before. For this opinion St. Basil gives three reasons: they fasted because they were bidden to *abstain* from the tree of knowledge; secondly, because they did not drink wine, which had not yet been invented; thirdly, because they *abstained* from flesh meat, which had not yet been allowed to them. This shows what kind of fast would satisfy St. Basil's requirements, as laid down in this homily; also, it makes manifest the meaning of the passage generally cited, as maintaining the modern 'natural' fast from midnight as necessary before a reverent communion.

The passage occurs in the midst of a flight of rhetoric about Samson's fast from wine and grapes as a Nazarite. The whole of the immediate context is here given, and the modicum generally quoted is marked by italics, that the reader may see and judge for himself whether there is any ground whatever for the passage being quoted, as bearing out the teaching of the necessity of abstinence from all kinds of food from the previous midnight before worthy celebration and reception.

¹ See for example COZZI, *Tractatus Dogmatico-moralis de Jejunio Ecclesiastico*, Romæ, 1724, p. 1: 'Jejunium insuper corporale, prout a parsimonia recernitur, aliud est quod naturale appellatur, aliud quod est juris naturæ, aliud denique Ecclesiasticum sive juris Ecclesiastici.'

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What made Esau profane and made him slave to his brother? Was it not one meal for which he gave up his birthright? Did not prayer with fasting obtain Samuel for his mother? What rendered Samson that mighty hero invincible? Was it not fasting with which he was conceived in the womb of his mother? Fasting conceived him—fasting was his nurse—fasting made him a man; that fasting which the angel prescribed to his mother, 'Whatever cometh of the vine thou shalt not eat, and wine and strong drink thou shalt not drink.' Fasting produces prophets, strengthens the mighty; fasting makes lawgivers wise, is a good guard of the soul, a safe comrade for the body; is armour to the brave, training to the athlete. This scares temptations, this anoints for godliness, is companion of sobriety, cause of temperance. In wars it plays the man, in peace it teaches quiet. It hallows the Nazarite, it perfects the priest. *For without fasting it is not possible to venture on the work of a priest*, not only in the present mystical and true worship, but also in that typical worship which was offered according to the law. This made Elijah witness of the great sight; for having cleansed his soul by fasting forty days, he was thus thought worthy in the cave in Horeb to see, as far as man can see, the Lord Almighty. Fasting he restored to the widow her son, having shown himself stronger than death in his fast.¹

Now from this context it is quite clear that throughout St. Basil is speaking of what would now be called an ecclesiastical fast; that is, self-denial of some kind and to some extent in the matter of eating and drinking. There is no hint here of a so-called 'natural' fast—viz. a perfect abstinence from all food since the previous midnight. This is clear without any explanation; but as it is always advisable to show how any argument is clear, a brief elucidation is subjoined.

The examples adduced by St. Basil will show what he

¹ *De Jejunio*, Hom. i. § 6, *Opera*, ed. Gaume, tom. ii. p. 6. A passage parallel to this is to be seen in St. Jerome (*Com. in Ep. ad Titum*, cap. i. 7, *Opera*, Veronæ, 1737, tom. vii. col. 700): 'Miramur autem Apostolum in Episcopis sive Presbyteris damnasce vinolentiam, quum in veteri quoque lege præceptum sit, sacerdotes quum ingrediuntur Templum ministrare Deo, vinum omnino non bibere, et Nazareum, quamdiu sanctam comam nutriat,' &c. There need be no more reference to Fasting Communion in St. Basil than there is in St. Jerome.

means. He speaks of Hannah praying for a child : Samson conceived and nourished : Nazarites : the priest in his ministration : and Elijah.

First, then, of Hannah : how was she *fasting* when she prayed for a child ? Scripture tells us that her prayer was offered just after a meal. The Hebrew distinctly tells us that Hannah partook of the meal. It is quite true that the Septuagint,¹ which St. Basil used, has 'after *they* had eaten,' as if Hannah herself was excluded, perhaps, from the eating, because it had been said before that 'she wept and did not eat.' But even then the meaning is quite clear. Hannah had no spirit to eat, as at a feast. Her husband had given her a double portion, more than to any other of his family, but she had no spirit to eat it. Therefore, when she had eaten and drunk a little (as the Hebrew tells us), she rose up and went to the Tabernacle to pray. This is clear even from the Greek of the Septuagint ; for St. Chrysostom praises Hannah for having eaten so sparingly as to be able to pray fervently with acceptance. He says,² 'If she was praying thus after eating and drinking, what would she be fasting ?' It is quite clear, then, that the fast of Hannah was taking less food than usual, not exhilarating herself with the double portion granted her by her loving husband, but eating a little without show of appetite. Here, then, there is no 'natural' fast, only the ecclesiastical fast of a small refecton.

Similarly, the fasting of Samson's mother, and Samson himself, was so called, because they took no wine or strong drink. This self-denial was, indeed, much greater than would appear to us ; for the other beverages, which now with us take the place of wine at our lighter meals, had not then been invented. The life-Nazarite drank nothing but water, but there was no restriction in other things beside what came from the vine. The 'fast,' therefore, of Samson and

¹ μετὰ τὸ φαγεῖν αὐτοῦς, Reg. i. 9.

² *De Annâ*, Sermo ii. § 5, Parisiis, tom. iv. p. 719 E.

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the Nazarites was self-restraint in the matter of all that came from the vine, and fermented liquor of all sorts, whether from grapes or other sources. When St. Basil, therefore, instances the fast of a Nazarite, there could have been no notion of a 'natural' fast present to his mind. Nor can it be said that St. Basil was ignorant of the rule of the Nazarite, for he quotes the very words of the angel to Samson's mother. It is true that a newspaper correspondent, pressed by this argument, said that St. Basil was probably speaking of monks under the name of Nazarites ; but as it is difficult to suppose that this gentleman had read the whole of St. Basil's Homily, it is not worth while to do more than mention his opinion.

St. Basil goes on to say that the fast which hallows the Nazarite, perfects the priest. We have seen that St. Basil was perfectly conscious what the 'fast' of the Nazarite was ; and this juxtaposition shows that he also knew quite well what the fast of the priest was, in his ministration or in his work as a priest. For it was the same during his week or period of service as was the fast of the Nazarite at all times. The law ran thus :¹ 'And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the Tabernacle of the Congregation, lest ye die : it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations.' That is, when the priest was 'on duty' for any of the ministrations about holy things, he was to refrain from wine and strong drink, he was to be for the time like the Nazarite. This was the only restriction on the priest, and falls short of the full fast of the Nazarite, since the priest clearly could eat grapes, and whatever came of the vine, so long as it was not fermented.

Now the juxtaposition of this command with the previous destruction of Nadab and Abihu has very naturally led many to think that their sin in offering 'strange fire' arose from their being at the time disordered with drink. Thus the Targum of Palestine on the passage runs as

¹ Leviticus x. 8, 9.

follows:¹ 'And the LORD spake with Aharon, saying, Drink neither wine nor anything that maketh drunk, neither thou nor thy sons with thee, at the time when ye are to enter into the Tabernacle of Ordinance, *as thy sons did who have died by the burning of fire.*' If then, as St. Basil argues, in the typical worship such care was necessary that a man was to fast from wine when he ventured on the work of a priest, how much more in the present mystical and true worship? 'Without fasting [from wine only] it is not possible to venture on the work of a priest, not only in the present mystical and true worship, but also in that typical worship which was offered according to the law.' The Christian priest was not to drink wine before he consecrated; but there is no word here of any other restriction. This, no doubt, was, as the Second Council of Mâcon, in the sixth century, said, that the priest should not be 'crapulatus vino' in so awful a service. In the second Homily of Fasting there is, perhaps, an allusion to this same restriction. In it St. Basil says: 'If you come to-morrow smelling of wine, and that rancid, how shall I reckon your crapula for fasting? Do not think it is because you have *not just poured in* unmixed wine, but because you are not pure from wine.' The same reference is also seen at the end of the first homily, in the passage quoted at the end of this chapter. But the only fast mentioned by St. Basil is the ecclesiastical fast, and our only plan to find out what he meant is to examine what he said.

Nor when he instances Elijah is his meaning altogether different; for though the fast of forty days is alleged, it is alleged, not as giving him corporal fitness for the approach to the Presence of the Almighty, but as purging his soul.

¹ The quotation is from the translation by Etheridge, *Targums on the Pentateuch*, 1865, ii. p. 174. Professor Blunt founds one of his Scriptural coincidences upon this, Part i. § 14. See the exhaustive monograph on the subject, *De Fato Nadabi et Abihu*, auctore Theodoro Scheltinga, Harlingæ, 1742, p. 50 sq. The author, however, does not think the conjecture is likely to be true.

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It is clear that St. Basil he'd, as St. Chrysostom did, that the value of fasting was to purge the soul from sin and make it worthy to approach; whereas the modern fast before Communion is the mere corporal, material, technical preparation of mouth and stomach, as if that were necessary. But that the thoughts of St. Basil were still on the ecclesiastical fast of discipline, and not on the material 'natural' fast, is seen by his further reference to Elijah. 'Fasting he restored to the widow her son.' This can only be in reference to the famine rations provided for the prophet by the poor widow. There is no room for any supposition that Elijah had refrained from all food from the previous midnight.

Such, then, are the examples to which St. Basil likens the fast of a Christian priest in his ministration. His preparation for his work is the previous ecclesiastical fast, the fasting habit, the practice of self-restraint and self-denial in the matter of food, and it may be the abstinence from wine before celebrating. This is all that can be drawn from St. Basil's beautiful homily.

The same is seen again in his second Homily of Fasting, where he is speaking of Lent and Holy Week as preparing for the Easter Communion. Here, too, there seems some reference to the admission of the Jewish priest to minister within the sanctuary.

The Lord receives the faster within the holy chancel:¹ He receives not him that is full of excess, as profane and unholy. For if you come to-morrow smelling of wine, and that rancid, how shall I reckon your *crapula* for fasting? Do not think it is because you have not just poured in unmixed wine, but because you are not pure from wine.²

¹ That is, for communion. The same phrase is used by St. Chrysostom: 'Therefore I pronounce, and cry with clear voice, that if anyone, after this exhortation and teaching, goes of his own accord to the wicked pest of the theatres, *I will not receive him within this chancel*; I will not give him to partake of the mysteries; I will not suffer him to touch the holy table.'—*Contra Ludos et Theatra*, tom. vi. 276 D. So again *De Davide et Saulo*, Hom. iii. tom. iv. 769 C.

² *Homilia de Jejunio II.* § 4, ed. Gaume, tom. ii. p. 17.

Here, then, 'the faster' does not mean one who has touched nothing since midnight, but one who has kept the ecclesiastical fast of some days previous. Again, if the phrase, 'because you have not just taken unmixed wine,' be thought to allude to a fast from midnight, there is no word about abstinence from anything but wine; and St. Basil distinctly says that a longer fast is necessary. St. Basil, then, is not in these passages an advocate of 'a symbolic fast beginning with a symbolic day' as necessary for worthy celebration.

Nothing has been adduced from any part of St. Basil's works to show that such a thing as a 'natural' fast was known to him. Indeed, the whole drift of all his writings goes far to prove that such a technical fast was unknown to him. But, if he had agreed with the modern rigorist school, it is simply impossible that he could have written as follows without some note of warning:—

Do you know Who it is you are about to receive? He that promised, *I and the Father will come and make our abode with him.* Why, then, do you first take up the ground with drunkenness, and block up the entrance to the Lord? Drunkenness does not receive the Lord; drunkenness chases away the Holy Spirit. For indeed smoke chases away bees, and the fumes of drunkenness chase away spiritual gifts.

It may be, and probably is, true that here St. Basil is speaking of excess the day before, as he is of the previous fast of Lent. But if the 'natural' fast had been known to him, it seems impossible that he would not have argued from it. He would have said something of this kind: If it be necessary that a man under pain of mortal sin take no food from midnight before Communion, how can you take to excess the day before?

But be this as it may, there is no word of the 'jejunium naturæ' in the two passages cited from St. Basil. In the first there is no word of fasting at all; in the second he is speaking of the ecclesiastical fast, or a fasting habit.

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CHAPTER VII.

ST. AMBROSE. A.D. 374.

TWO passages have been alleged from St. Ambrose as bearing out the rigorist view of Fasting Communion. But it is necessary always to bear in mind that the modern teaching about Fasting Communion is, that it is necessary, for a reverent reception, that no food shall have been taken since the stroke of midnight next preceding. When, therefore, in ancient writers we read of a fast before Communion, we must not at once take for granted that the passage is favourable to this modern view, as some seem inclined to do, but we must see what, indeed, the writer meant. If we do this with the passages alleged from St. Ambrose, we shall find that he is in either case speaking of the Lenten fast; and in the former passage he lays down the principle that the Easter Communion is prepared for, and purchased by, the strict discipline of the Lenten fast.

It was, as we should expect, a common view of the Christian fasts in general, and of Lent in particular, that they purged the soul, and made a man a more fitting recipient of the heavenly banquet at Easter. Later on, when the testimony of St. Chrysostom is examined, it will be seen that many Fathers, such as St. Gregory Nazianzene, St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, St. Leo, and Theophilus of Alexandria, speak of the fast as a purification before the feast, and thus speak of the fast before Communion. But this is a perfectly different idea altogether from that which modern rigorists entertain about Fasting Communion.

When, therefore, a passage is cited in favour of Fasting Communion, it is not at all to the point if it be found to speak of Lenten preparation.

The first passage from St. Ambrose is from his treatise '*De Eliâ et Jejuniis*,' and, as it is wholly about the Lenten preparation, it is somewhat misleading to cite it in favour of Fasting Communion. The treatise opens in a manner which has very much in common with St. Basil's magnificent sermon on fasting; but while St. Ambrose borrows much from St. Basil, he is no slavish imitator, but he assimilates the matter, and reproduces it in his own manner. The passage is written much in the same strain as an earnest priest now-a-days would employ to his own congregation, to persuade them to a thorough and true keeping of the Lenten discipline.

After having spoken of other advantages of the Lenten fast, he goes on to speak of its advantage as preparatory to the Paschal Communion: ¹—

The mystic table also is prepared with fasting. That table of which David says, *Thou hast prepared a table before me against them that trouble me*. This table is purchased at the price of hunger; and that cup, inebriating with its sobriety, is sought out by thirst for the heavenly Sacraments. For the Lord said, *Ho, ye that thirst, come to the water; and ye that have no money, come and buy, and drink, and eat*. And elsewhere he says, *Lo, they that serve Me shall eat, but ye shall be hungry. Lo, they that serve Me shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty*. Who are the ye spoken of except those who drank before, of whom he said above, *Ye prepared a table for demons, and filled the cup of fortune*. Therefore, if the holy fasts lead us at length to that venerable table; if by this hunger we gain eternal gifts—why do we doubt about those things which are in human use, that the fast will make these things even sweeter to us?

But it is not every hunger that makes an acceptable fast, but hunger that is undertaken from fear of God. Think: in Lent the fast is every day except Saturday and Sunday. The Lord's Passover concludes this fast. Now the day of the Resurrection has come;

¹ *De Eliâ et Jejuniis*, cap. x. § 33; *Opera*, Parisiis, 1686, tom. i. p. 544 v.

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the elect are baptized, they come to the Altar, they receive the Sacrament, they drink it in thirsting from every vein. Rightly do men say, when they have been refreshed with spiritual food and spiritual drink, *Thou hast prepared a table before me against them that trouble me.* But not only hunger is sought, but the full discipline of the fast. [St. Ambrose then quotes Isaiah lviii. 3-7, as showing what was the false and what the true fast.] You see what is the kind and form of the fast, what is the habit of mind, that you may have time for prayer, that you may meditate in the law of God day and night.

There can be no question whatever that this passage from St. Ambrose is wholly about the Lenten fast, preparing not only by hunger and thirst of body, but by the accompaniments of a true fast, prayer and meditation, for the reception of the Easter Eucharist with reverent eagerness. It is, therefore, manifestly incorrect to quote the passage as in any way bearing upon the purely technical, or, as some say, symbolic, fast of abstinence from food from the previous midnight, for it speaks only of the ecclesiastical fast, which, as moderns say, has nothing to do with this fast before Communion. The ecclesiastical fast is a preparation of the whole man, body and soul, by way of humiliation, mortification, purification, according to the Fathers. The natural fast (so called technically) is a preparation of the mouth and stomach, according to the moderns.

The second passage alleged from St. Ambrose seems at first sight much more to the purpose ; but it will be found, on closer examination, that the only reference is to the ecclesiastical fast of Lent.

It occurs in the eighth sermon on the hundred and nineteenth Psalm, in a passage which is an exposition of the sixty-second verse : 'At midnight I will rise to give thanks to Thee, because of Thy righteous judgments.' St. Ambrose says that it is not enough to be prayerful by day, but we must rise by night and at midnight for this purpose. Night is specially a time when prayer is requisite ; for then the body is languid because of digestion, and

the mind is sleepy, and the soul is oppressed, and this all gives the tempter an advantage. Hence it will be found that night is a time for temptations. This is the reason why we find that night and midnight was a time for the punishment of God to issue: this, therefore, was the time that the Egyptian firstborn were slain. In order, then, that the Israelites might be free from this punishment, Moses sacrificed the lamb at evening tide, that those that ate this and celebrated the Lord's Passover might escape the sword of the destroyer. This, then, leads the preacher to the question of the antitype of the Paschal Lamb: '—

Diligently attend to this, understand it wisely, sift it anxiously. This is not spoken without meaning, but divine mysteries are declared to you. Do you, too, prevent the snares of the tempter; lay up beforehand the heavenly banquet. The fast [of Lent] has been proclaimed, take heed you neglect it not. And if hunger does force you to a daily prandium,² or if intemperance throws aside the fast, yet preserve yourself the more by the heavenly feast.³ Do not let the feasts which have been prepared extort from you to be empty of the heavenly Sacrament. Put it off a little while, the end of the day is not far off; nay, many days are of that kind that men come to church directly after noon, and hymns are sung and the oblation celebrated.⁴ Then, at all events, stand by ready, that you

¹ In *Psalmum* cxviii., viii. § 48; *Opera*, Parisiis, 1686, tom. i. p. 1073 D.

² The taking or omission of the *prandium*, or forenoon meal, constituted the keeping or breaking the fast. St. Ambrose says, 'Keep the fast, but if hunger compels you to break the fast' . . . See p. 132 seq.

³ The Latin of this passage is: 'Et si te fames quotidianum cogit ad prandium, aut intemperantia declinat jejunium; tamen celesti magis te servato convivio.' Surely this recommends the exact opposite to what modern rigorists would insist on. St. Ambrose says, 'If you are really unable to keep the fast and are driven to eat the forenoon meal, which involves the breach of Lent, and your lack of self-restraint refuses the fast, yet, nevertheless, take the Communion to save you in the temptations of the night.' He manifestly allows an evening Communion, though the morning prandium have been taken; at the same time he earnestly persuades his hearers in the passage that follows to keep the ecclesiastical fast, just as any earnest bishop or priest would in our own day.

⁴ The ecclesiastical fast of Lent lasted till different times on different days at Milan. Sometimes the fast was broken at mid-day, and sometimes in the evening. St. Ambrose is here alluding to this, and persuading men to keep the ecclesiastical fast. We learn from St. Chrysostom that men kept away

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may receive your garrison, that you may eat the Body of the Lord Jesus, in which is remission of sins, the imploring of divine reconciliation, and eternal protection. Receive beforehand the Lord Jesus in the hospice of your mind: where His Body is, there is Christ. When the adversary has seen your house occupied by the brilliance of the Heavenly Presence, perceiving that space for his temptations has been stopped up by Christ, he will fly and go back; and you will pass the middle of the night without any offence. The evening sacrifice also warns you never to forget Christ. You cannot forget when you go to bed that Lord to whom in the fall of the day you poured forth your prayer, who filled you hungry with the feast of His Body. Nay, what you thought of at eventide you will quickly remember when you wake up. The Lord Jesus Himself will call you. He will admonish you to rise, and take to you the armour of prayer at that time when the tempter is wont to make his incursions.

Here, then, the course of St. Ambrose's argument leads him to speak of the evening Communion as a safeguard against the snares of the tempter at night. In Lent the celebration was at mid-day, or in the evening, because the ecclesiastical fast lasted either till mid-day or evening, and the Communion was held to break the fast. The Communion was the close of the fast, and was the reward of having kept the fast; but St. Ambrose does not at all say that the taking any food at all from the previous midnight of necessity prevents Communion. He says if you take the *prandium*, yet the more take the Communion; though he earnestly persuades towards the keeping the fast, and evidently regards the Communion as the guerdon of those who have kept the ecclesiastical discipline. There is no more here to favour the rigorist view of Fasting Communion than there would be in the Canon of Toledo, which repelled from the Easter Communion the man who had not

from church altogether if they had not kept the ecclesiastical fast, so that there is no necessary question here of the *jejunium naturæ* before the act of Communion. St. Jerome argues against a man who partook of the reserved Sacrament at home when he thought himself unfit to go to church.—Ep. xlviii. § 15; *Opera*, Veronæ, 1734, tom. i. col. 225.

kept the fast of Good Friday.¹ If St. Ambrose had said (what he does not say), 'you know that the man who does not fast from all food until evening may not communicate,' it would be nothing more than an assertion of the necessity of the ecclesiastical fast to the proper preparation for reception of the Sacrament.²

There is nothing, then, in St. Ambrose which has yet been alleged, which really bears out the modern rigorist view, that proper reception necessitates abstinence from all kinds of food from the previous midnight.

¹ Co. Toletan. IV. (A.D. 633) can. viii. : 'Quicumque in eo jejunium præter parvulos, senes, et languidos ante peractas indulgentiæ preces resolverit, a paschali gaudio depelletur nec in eo Sacramentum Corporis et Sanguinis Domini percipiat.'—Bruns, i. p. 225.

² The author of the paper, quoted before, on 'Evening Communions,' in the *Christian Remembrancer* for July 1860 (vol. xl. p. 205), writes as follows : 'It would appear probable that at Constantinople—at least in A.D. 404—there was a late celebration on Easter Eve. But St. Ambrose specially, and without making any exception, enjoins a strict fast upon the consciences of those who communicated late at Milan : just as the Eastern canons would have enforced it at Constantinople.' The passage referred to in St. Ambrose seems to be the same as the latter of the two here spoken of ; and the truth of the foregoing paragraph lies hid in the words *just as*. For *just as* the Eastern 'canons' on Fasting Communion, in force at Constantinople in A.D. 404, were passed on the Greek Kalends and had no existence, so there is no proof of a 'natural' fast enjoined by St. Ambrose.

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CHAPTER VIII.

ARCHBISHOP TIMOTHY OF ALEXANDRIA. A.D. 385.

THE 'canonical answer' of Archbishop Timothy, in the fourth century, evidences that at that time there was commencing in the East amongst some a scrupulous feeling about the fast before Communion. At the same time it is not easy to determine whether the fast spoken of was the previous fast for mortification and purifying of the soul in preparation for Communion, or the more modern view of a fast from the beginning of the day.

It is not difficult to understand how the question arose at Alexandria. From the first foundation of that city there was a strong colony of Jews there. Alexander had encouraged them to settle there, and offered them great privileges in his new city; and thenceforward Alexandria formed a school of rabbinical theology which proved a rival to the school of Palestine. The Alexandrian Jews even threw off their allegiance to the Temple at Jerusalem, and formed an establishment of their own at Heliopolis.

Everyone knows how great an influence Alexandria had in preparing the way for Christianity. The translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek has well been called the gate of the heathen world to Christianity, and this is due to Alexandria. Less direct, probably, was the influence produced by the teaching of the school of which Philo is the representative; yet there can be little doubt that the abstract speculation of the Alexandrian philosophy prepared the way for the realization of these searchings after the truth.

This being the case, we should expect to find that at Alexandria the Jews, who formed a third, or two-fifths, of the population, would exert a great influence upon the tone and feelings of Christianity.

Now the Jews fasted with great strictness: their religious fast was from sunset to sunset, and during this time they would not taste a drop of water, for even a drop of water broke their fast. This will account for the question arising at Alexandria, whether water broke the fast in preparation for Communion; but at the same time it raises the question, whether the fast was not the previous fast to purify the soul from sin: for the only religious fast known to the Jews was from sunset to sunset. It is quite true that some assert now-a-days that there was a religious fast before the Passover; but this is quite unknown to modern Rabbis and ancient rabbinical interpreters, and depends upon the mistake of a modern writer.¹ Men were forbidden to eat leavened bread for two or three hours before the Paschal meal, that they 'might assemble with desire' to eat the unpalatable unleavened biscuit. There was no restriction as to their eating anything else whatever; and, as a Rabbi assured me, there is no religious duty in it at all, for a man would not commit a sin if he did eat leavened bread, since all that was really required was that a man should eat some of the Passover cake with apparent relish. While, then, the strictness of a Jewish fast is a reason why the question about water breaking the fast before Communion should arise at Alexandria, it also gives us good reason for thinking that the fast spoken of is not a mere technical fast from all food for a specified time, but the preparation of the soul by a previous fast of mortification.

There is also another reason for this supposition; for ecclesiastical historians especially tell us that at this time it was the habit in Egypt to communicate on Saturday evening after a somewhat sumptuous meal. There is no

¹ See below, Part IV.

reason for doubting that this was in imitation of the original institution. Now, if there was at that time at Alexandria a general rule or a general persuasion that it was sinful to communicate after food taken since midnight next preceding, we cannot understand how any such custom as a weekly celebration after food could have been allowed in the neighbourhood. But if the fast be only a previous fast of mortification, it is very easy to understand that after a fast lasting from sunset to sunset they took their meal in memory of the *Cena Dominica*, and communicated afterwards, as was done pretty generally on Maundy Thursday.

The Archbishop Timothy, then, had been asked certain questions, and his replies have been recorded as canonical answers, which in general will be found to commend themselves to most men of sense. The sixteenth question and answer are as follows:—

Question. If a man fasting with a view to Communion unwillingly swallow water when washing out his mouth, or in the bath, may he communicate afterwards?

Answer. Yes; since if Satan have found it an occasion of hindering from the Communion, he will do this the oftener.¹

Here, then, at all events, we find that the Archbishop would not agree with the modern rigorists, for they would have said he might not communicate if he had swallowed even a drop of water since the previous midnight.

But it may be that the nearness of time of the bath to the celebration may have influenced the question. The language of St. Augustine shows that it was usual to take the bath in the morning, just before the *prandium*, or morning meal. He traces the origin of the common breach of the Lenten fast on Maundy Thursday to the custom of bathing on that day, and he at once goes on to say that men could not bear the bath and the fast at the same time. If it were not natural to take the bath always in the

¹ Σύνταγμα κανόνων, Athens, 1854, tom. iv. p. 341.

morning, it is not easy to see why the bath might not have been taken in the afternoon before the three o'clock refectio spoken of by St. Augustine. It might well be, therefore, that a man would take his bath and then at once attend the Synaxis with the intention of communicating, and of taking his *ariston* after the service. This bath was somewhat akin to the Turkish bath,¹ and the mouthful of water perchance arose from the cold water dashed against the man on the one side and the other, after his stay in the hot room. The sudden cold would make him gasp for breath, and the water dashed against his face would be the more likely to enter his mouth in his spasmodic breathing. But we must remember that the work of day had been going on for some four or five hours before nine o'clock; and a man might consider himself fasting though he had taken the early mouthful of food at rising, and he might be troubled at the bath-water forced into his mouth, which he might consider the snare of Satan to hinder him from Communion.

At all events, there is considerable evidence elsewhere that at Alexandria there was no general persuasion that food taken since midnight prevented reverent Communion. This is seen from the decision of the patriarch Dionysius, who allowed some to break their fast at midnight, and others at three o'clock on Easter morning; it is seen in the fact that about Alexandria and in the Thebais there was a habit of communicating after food on Saturdays; it is seen from the Canonical answer of the Patriarch Theophilus about the Epiphany fast falling on a Sunday. A few dates

¹ Speaking of the baths in ordinary use, St. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 200), nearly two centuries before Timothy of Alexandria, writes: 'The ancients call them places for fulling men, since they wrinkle men's bodies sooner than they ought, and by cooking them, as it were, compel them to become prematurely old; the flesh like iron being softened by the heat, hence we require cold as it were to temper and give an edge.' (*Works*, vol. i. p. 308, Clark's *Ante-Nicene Library*.) An interesting and appreciative description of a bath will be found in Lord Lytton's *Last Days of Pompeii*.

he said were to be eaten in the morning in honour of the Sunday, and the Synaxis was to be held in the afternoon in honour of the fast. We cannot think that either Dionysius or Theophilus would have given these decisions, if they had thought that thereby they were incapacitating their flock from reverent communion or priests from celebrating.

It is certainly instructive that this question should have been asked at Alexandria; for while it may be traced to the influence of the carnal mind of the Jews there, there is good reason on this account for supposing that the real reference is to the previous fast of mortification, and not to any supposed 'symbolical' fast.

But if indeed there were any reference to this technical 'jejunium naturæ' (which I do not at all believe), it might have historical interest, but no particular binding vigour amongst ourselves. If any man reads through the six volumes of the Eastern Canon Law as lately published at Athens, he will find much to astonish him, to say the least, and much which will show how great a difference there is in some points of discipline. To take an example at random from canons affecting reverence to the Sacrament of Baptism. There is a Canon of Nicephorus the Confessor,¹ which allows that an infant in danger of death must be baptized; but it lays down that on no account is the child to be returned to its mother, or even be in the same room with its mother, until after her forty days of separation she have been purified.

This would scarcely be accepted in England as binding. There is, therefore, no binding force in the canonical answer of Timothy, unless by acceptance and usage it has been and still is acknowledged in England; but if there be any binding value in it, it certainly lays down that the water does not hinder the act of pious Communion. This is not what the rigorist teachers amongst us would accept in modern times.

¹ Σύσταμα κανόνων, Athens, 1854, tom. iv. p. 431.

CHAPTER IX.

THEOPHILUS OF ALEXANDRIA. A.D. 412.

THERE is a remarkable canon or canonical answer of Theophilus of Alexandria,¹ which has a great bearing on the question of the modern fast before Communion. It has not been hitherto quoted in this connection, but it bears testimony to the fact that in his estimation, at all events, there was no necessity for a fast from the previous midnight.

On a certain year the fast of the Epiphany fell upon a Sunday, and Theophilus the Patriarch of Alexandria was applied to in the difficulty. For there was this dilemma. If men fasted on Sunday they would be condemned as heretics, but if they neglected the fast of the Epiphany they would be transgressing ecclesiastical tradition. It would seem that no general rule had yet been determined upon with respect to a difficulty of this character, and the Patriarch was appealed to for a decision in the matter.

In his answer he suggested a compromise, saying that the day should in a certain measure partake of the character of both fast and feast, so that thus either requirement would be satisfied. In order to do reverence to Sunday and avoid the reproach of fasting on the Lord's Resurrection day, some portion of food was to be taken in the morning. This, as has been seen before, would at once place the day

¹ Theophilus was consecrated to the see of Alexandria in A.D. 385, on the death of Timothy, whose evidence is discussed in Chap. VIII.

in the category of feasts, for no food would be taken in the forenoon of a fasting day. But in order to show respect for the fast, the food so taken was to consist only of a few dates; while the Synaxis was to be held at the time usual upon fasting days—viz. after three o'clock in the afternoon.

This is a very instructive and interesting decision. It shows that at the beginning of the fifth century a slight meal taken in the morning did not prevent men from either celebrating or communicating in the afternoon. The accusation against unpopular bishops, therefore, that they communicated after food, has reference, probably, to taking food immediately before Communion, and not to any supposed symbolism about not taking bodily food on a technically defined day before receiving the spiritual food of the Blessed Sacrament. The decision is couched in the following form :—

Both custom and propriety require that we should honour every Lord's Day, and on it keep holy day, since on it our Lord Jesus Christ led for us the Resurrection from the dead. Wherefore, in the Holy Scriptures it has also been called the first day, as being to us the beginning of life, and the eighth day as far exceeding the keeping of rest of the Jews. Since, then, it chanced that it is the fast of the holy Theophanies, let us compromise this and prudently accommodate one to the other. So that by partaking of a few dates¹ we may at once avoid the heresies which dishonour the Resurrection day of our Lord Jesus Christ, and pay due respect to the fast, by awaiting the evening Synaxis which on that day, God willing, will be celebrated. Let us, therefore, on that day hold Synaxis after three o'clock.²

¹ Petau in his notes on St. Epiphanius (*Adv. Hæres.* lib. iii. tom. ii. § 22, Coloniae, 1682, tom. ii. App. p. 359) says that these dates were to be taken in the evening after the celebration at the Synaxis. But the context implies differently; and the synopsis of the canon as given in the *Syntagma Canonôn* has, 'having taken a few dates in honour of the Resurrection Day, let us await the evening Synaxis.' There can be no question that the explanation in the text is correct.

² *Σύναξις νυκτεία*, Athens, 1854, tom. iv. p. 342.

The holding Synaxis after three o'clock gave the character of a fast to the day; for, as we learn elsewhere, the public celebration on ordinary fasting days was at three o'clock. The Patriarch says that 'the *evening* Synaxis will be then celebrated,' whereas the ordinary Sunday or festival Synaxis would have been in the morning. This Synaxis was the chief assembly of the day when the Blessed Sacrament was celebrated. That this was so is clear from the language of the Patriarch, who says that out of respect to the fast there will be evening Synaxis. But he bids men take some dates in the morning to show respect for the Sunday. It is clear, therefore, that in his mind there was no reason why the partaking of some slight portion of food should impede Communion later on in the day.

It may be that here, too, we have an instance of the prevalence of the opinion that a small portion of food did not break the fast. The small portion taken at rising from bed was sometimes called 'a continuation of the fast,' as if it did not interfere with a man's being still regarded as fasting.¹ But some may argue that the fact of dates being recommended to be eaten out of respect for Sunday distinctly implies that the fast was thereby relaxed. If so, this relaxation of fast could not impede Communion, for the Patriarch orders the evening Synaxis on that same day.

In the fifth century, then, at Alexandria we find no such rule or custom as that a man might not communicate if he had taken any food since the stroke of midnight. It is seen from a series of testimonies that no such custom was prevalent at this Patriarchate.

At the end of the third century it certainly is seen from the canonical answer of the patriarch Dionysius.² Applica-

¹ See above, p. 129.

² *Ἀποκρίσις καὶ ἀπάντησις*, Athens, 1854, tom. iv. p. 1. The bearing of this answer of Dionysius is argued out in a note to the next Chapter, on the testimony of St. Epiphanius, p. 262.

tion had been made to the Patriarch by a bishop, to know when men might cease fasting on Easter morning. He answered that, properly considered, the fast should end when the Resurrection of our Lord took place; and he then examined the question carefully, to see if this could be accurately determined from the four Evangelists. Having established the position that the exact hour was not certainly known, he gives his decision, that if men have not fasted more than Good Friday and Easter Eve, they must protract their fast until the fourth watch; that is, until after three o'clock on Easter morning. If, however, a man have been diligent in fasting all Holy Week, then he may cease his fast at midnight. It is inconceivable that Dionysius would have given this answer if he had thought that a 'natural' fast from the stroke of midnight was necessary for Communion. He would not have allowed, much less have laid down, a rule which would have prevented his people from communicating upon Easter Day; for the custom of not communicating on the day itself was then unknown.

Similarly, it is seen that if the fast spoken of in the question and answer of the patriarch Timothy be the previous fast from midnight, he had no such rigorous view as modern Roman Catholics entertain; while the habit in the neighbourhood of Alexandria, in the fifth century, of communicating every Saturday after food, is a further proof that in that patriarchate, at all events, there was no such universally prevailing custom of Fasting Communion in the sense in which this is now understood.

Perhaps some may be found who will endeavour to lessen this testimony of Theophilus by referring to his unjustifiable behaviour in the whole matter of St. Chrysostom's deposition. But we must remember that the Trullan Council accepted his decisions as canonical, and the Eastern Church to this day numbers this answer amongst her canons: it has, therefore, greater authority than would accrue from the personal character of Theophilus. Again, we

must also remember that in those troublous times Theophilus was not the only one who was to blame. Epiphanius gave rise to much disturbance by his unwarrantable interference in several parts of the East, and at the end of his long life came to Constantinople to arraign St. Chrysostom of heresy. But he retired disappointed to find that he carried so little weight against the patriarch; and at his last interview with him he expressed a wish that St. Chrysostom might not die a bishop; that is, in full exercise of diocesan jurisdiction. St. Chrysostom retorted with the wish that the old man might not live to reach home. Both wishes came to pass. Theophilus, therefore, had not a monopoly of vexatious interference; and he certainly had the friendship and esteem of St. Jerome.

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CHAPTER X.

ST. EPIPHANIUS. A.D. 403.

THE reference generally given to St. Epiphanius in favour of Fasting Communion is to a passage which speaks of the time of celebrating the Sacrament. As has been seen, this argument is really valueless, since it proves nothing. The general hour for celebration, from the fourth century downwards for a long period, was nine o'clock in the morning. In our degenerate days nine o'clock is not generally regarded so early as to exclude the possibility of taking food before that time; and certainly, when men rose to their work, or at all events rose from their bed of sleep, at four o'clock in the morning, it is worthless to argue that nine o'clock was at all early in any true sense of the word. If nine o'clock was early then, noon or one o'clock in the afternoon is early now; and it would be as valid an argument to say, that because men communicated so early as noon, there was strong ground for believing that they took no food before communicating. If there is any force in the argument, there would also be force in arguing that, whenever we read of there being an evening celebration, it was necessarily *after* food. But the truth is, there is no force in either assertion. For in these days the reception of the Sacrament was regarded as breaking the ecclesiastical fast. When, therefore, the fast lasted till noon, the celebration was at noon; when the fast lasted till three, the celebration was at three, and so on: this does not in the least prove that it was regarded as wrong to take any food before Communion at other times. Nay, the very fact that

the Eucharist was then thought to break the fast may be a reminiscence of the time when the celebration was after a meal, or intimately connected with a meal, which was the breach of the fast.

This is the only evidence that St. Epiphanius gives. Indeed, the worthlessness of the argument may be seen from this, that St. Epiphanius says that on Maundy Thursday, in some places, the celebration is at three o'clock in the afternoon, the very time, on the very day, when St. Augustine recommends that the celebration should be held *after food*. No chain is stronger than its weakest link; if, therefore, this argument from mere time is thus shown to break down at this point, it cannot bear the strain that some would have us believe.

The whole passage has been given from St. Epiphanius for several reasons. It will be seen how minutely he goes into some particulars, especially about fasting; and it will be seen that he does not mention *Fasting Communion* at all. If it were regarded by him as important as some regard it now, there can be little question that he would have reckoned it amongst the practices of the Church known to him. We find him laying great stress on the point of a celibate clergy, denying the possibility of a man who had married twice being admissible to the diaconate; but he has no word of *Fasting Communion*:—thus presenting the exact opposite to Bishop Jeremy Taylor, who is cited by the rigorists as recommending *Fasting Communion*, and himself entered matrimony with more than one wife.

Hitherto¹ we were briefly speaking of the things which this the only Catholic Church holds concerning the faith; She that is also the innocent Dove being the only one to her Husband, as He saith, *One is My Dove*; and likewise concerning her very many virgins, who are without number; and concerning the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; and

¹ *Adversus Hæreses*, lib. iii. tom. ii. cap. xxi. Coloniae, 1682, tom. i. p. 1103.

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concerning the Incarnate Christ and His perfect presence, and the other parts of the faith. But concerning the laws of the same Church I must again briefly set out in part the outline of the same laws, such as naturally have been and are being observed in her, some by enactment, some by voluntary undertaking, since God rejoices over the virtue of His own teaching. And, first of all, there is a foundation, and, so to say, a step in the Church—viz. Virginitv—which is practised and guarded by many, and is held in reputation. But close after virginity follows solitary life with many of the monks and nuns. After this comes continence, which is founded on the same course. Then comes widowhood, kept with all diligence and blameless conversation. Following on these ranks there is holy matrimony, held in great honour, especially single marriages, and in strict observance of the commandments. But if any man on the death of his wife, or any woman on the death of her husband, wishes it, he or she is permitted to be married to a second wife or husband after the death of the first. But as head of all these the mother, so to speak, and producer is the holy priesthood springing chiefly from virgins; but if not from virgins, from monks. But if there should not be enough for the ministry from monks, then from those who live apart from their wives, or are widowed from their first marriage. But in the Church it is not lawful to receive into the priesthood a man who has married a second time; not even if such an one be separate from his wife or widowed; [he is rejected from] the order of Bishop, priest, deacon, and subdeacon. After the priesthood itself there remains the order of Readers, composed of all the ranks; that is, of virgins, and monks, and continent, and widowed, and those still in holy matrimony, and if there be necessity, even from those who after the death of their first wife have married another. For a Reader is not a priest, but as it were a scribe of the Word. And Deaconesses also are appointed for ministering to women only, for the sake of propriety, should necessity arise, on account of Baptism or inspection of their bodies. These, too, are either living in continence, once married, or are widowed from one only husband, or are ever virgins. Then next to these are the exorcists, and interpreters from one language to another in reading or in sermons. There remain also the grave-diggers, who lay out the bodies of those who fall asleep, and the door-keepers, and the whole of good order.

But the celebration of the Synaxes was ordered by the Apostles

on Wednesday and Friday, and the Lord's Day, and on Wednesday and Friday in fasting until three o'clock ; since the Lord was seized in the twilight of Wednesday, and was crucified on Friday, and the Apostles handed on the tradition that fasts should be kept on those days, in fulfilment of the saying, *When the Bridegroom shall be taken away, then shall they fast in those days.* And the fast has not been ordained for us that we should gratify Him that suffered for us, but that for our own salvation we should confess the Passion of the Lord, which He Himself underwent for our sakes, and that our fastings might be reckoned by God on behalf of our sins. And through the whole year the fast is kept in the same holy Catholic Church, I say, on Wednesday and Friday until three o'clock, except only the whole fifty days of Pentecost, during which no one kneels, and there has been no fast appointed. But, instead of Synaxes at three o'clock on Wednesdays and Fridays, the Synaxes are celebrated as on the Lord's Day, in the early morning. And, again, in the fifty days (spoken of before) of Pentecost there is no fast; nor on the day of the Epiphanies (when the Lord was born in the flesh) is it lawful to fast, whether it fall on Wednesday or Friday. But by a good choice the ascetics of the Church fast constantly, except the Lord's Day and Pentecost, and always keep vigils. But the same holy Catholic Church reckons all Sundays festivals, and celebrates the Synaxes at dawn, and does not fast. For it is forbidden to fast on the Lord's Day. And Lent, which precedes the seven days of the holy Easter, the same Church has been accustomed to keep in like manner, passing it in fasting ; but the Sundays never, not even in Lent. But the six days before Easter all the people pass in eating dry food—I mean, using at that time bread and salt and water at evening time. But also the zealous ones add on two or three or four days, and some the whole week up to the cock-crow of Sunday's dawn ; and they pass the six days in watchings ; and again they celebrate the Synaxes on the same six days, and the whole of Lent between three and six o'clock. But in some places they watch the night after Thursday till dawn of Friday and dawn of Sunday only. And in some places the worship of the Dispensation is celebrated on Thursday at three o'clock. And there is dismissal, men continuing in the same eating of dry food. But in other places there is no worship of the Dispensation except at dawn of Sunday,¹

¹ This is probably the passage, or one of them, which gives the reason for the reference to St. Epiphanius in favour of Fasting Communion. But the

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when there is dismissal at cock-crow on the Resurrection Day, and the great assembly on Easter Day, as has been appointed. But the other mysteries concerning Baptism and its deep teaching are celebrated according to the tradition of the Gospel and the Apostles.

But, in the case of those who have died, they offer the memorial by name, celebrating prayers, and worship, and dispensations. And matin hymns are offered in the holy Church continually, and matin prayers, and similarly psalms and prayers by candlelight. Some of her monks live in the cities, and some also settle in monasteries, and remove to a distance from men. And some like to have long hair for habit's sake of their own mind, without direction of the Gospel, or approbation of the Apostles. For the holy Apostle Paul rescinded this fashion. And there are other noteworthy habits observed in the same Holy Catholic Church—I mean that of abstaining from all flesh, both of four-footed beasts, and birds, and fishes, and eggs, and cheese, and other different habits, because each will receive his reward according to his own labour. And some abstain from all these, but some from four-footed beasts alone, and partake of birds and the rest. And others abstain from birds also, but take eggs and fish. Others do not take eggs ; others abstain from fish and take cheese ; others do not even take cheese. But now some also abstain from bread, and others from fruits and cooked food. Many also lie on the ground. Others do not wear shoes. Others also wear sackcloth underneath, who wear it with a good motive for discipline and penance. For it is unseemly to go about in sackcloth which is visible to all, as some do ; and it is unseemly, as we said, to go about in chains, as some thought fit to do. But the majority of these abstain from the bath ; and some renounce the world, choosing easy trades and not busy ones, that they may not lead an idle life, and not eat their bread

eighty-ninth canon of the Trullan Council say : that the fast of Easter Eve may be broken at midnight ; and another rule, at the end of the third century, was that the fast is not to be broken till three o'clock in the morning, unless a man has been fasting all Holy Week, in which case he may break his fast at midnight. This raises the question, Did the man who broke his fast at midnight communicate at the same time as the man who broke his fast three hours afterwards ? If so, the former broke his fast before he communicated, or else the latter broke his fast before the prescribed time, for the Eucharist broke the fast. The fact of a celebration at *dawn* on Easter Day does not, therefore, at all prove that men were then fasting the *natural* fast from midnight. See 'Επιστολή του μακαρίου Διονυσίου Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἀλεξανδρείας: *Χρίστος καὶ κανόνων*, Athens, 1854, tom. iv. p. 1.

with heaviness. And the majority exercise themselves in psalmody, and constant prayers, and reading of holy Scripture and repeating it by heart.

But in the matter of hospitality, and philanthropy, and mercy towards all, to all has this fruit of the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church been preached. And she has Baptism instead of circumcision, which was made obsolete in Christ. She has her rest on the Great Sabbath instead of the little one. She abstains from communion with all heresies. She forbids fornication, and adultery, and lasciviousness, and idolatry, and murder, and all transgression, and magic, and charms, astronomy, auguries, casting lots, incantations, amulets, and what are called phylacteries. She forbids theatres, and horse-shows, and huntings, and concerts, and all evil speaking, and detraction, and all fighting, and squabbling, and injustice, and avarice, and usury. Merchants she does not receive heartily, but reckons them inferior to all. She accepts the offerings from those who do not act unjustly, nor commit crimes, but live uprightly. She arranges to offer prayers to God without ceasing, with all frequency and fervency, and with kneeling on the appointed days by night and day. In some places, too, they celebrate the Synaxes on Saturday; but not everywhere. But with the highest branches there is an observance of not swearing at all, nor reviling, nor cursing, according to the Saviour's commands, nor indeed lying, so far as in them lies. The majority also sell their property and give to the poor.

Such, then, is the whole passage from St. Epiphanius, who does not throughout mention that there is a fast before Communion, much less that it is a habit or necessity. It is quite true that he speaks of the celebration being sometimes in the morning, and sometimes in the evening, at the end of the fast, and on Easter Day at dawn. But on fast days the celebration was postponed because it in itself was held to break the fast: this does not prove that a fast from midnight was a necessary preparation for Communion. Neither does the mere time of dawn on Easter Day preclude the possibility of any food being taken previously. St. Epiphanius, indeed, most probably intends to say that the fast was protracted until the Communion at dawn; this is the force of the phrase, 'there is dismissal at cock-

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munion at dawn;
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crow.' But the Trullan Council allowed the fast to be broken at midnight; and an earlier rule allowed the man who had observed the fast of Holy Week to break his fast at midnight, but others were to abstain till three o'clock in the morning. When, therefore, were these men supposed to communicate? There was but one celebration for them. If they communicated at twelve o'clock, both broke their fast then, and neither protracted their discipline till three o'clock, for the Eucharist was held to break the fast. But if the Communion was at dawn, then the man who broke his fast at twelve o'clock was not fasting the 'natural' fast when he communicated. The very fact of this rule would seem to imply that, when it was passed, there was no commanding necessity of a fast from midnight before Communion. There is, therefore, good reason to agree with the orthodox John Johnson when he wrote, 'there is no just cause to believe that they thought this necessary, at least, I am not sensible that they tell us so.'

CHAPTER XI.

ST. CHRYSOSTOM. DIED A.D. 407.

THERE are two passages of St. Chrysostom which have been quoted over and over again¹ in favour of Fasting Communion; that is, in favour of the practice of taking no food between the stroke of midnight and the act of Communion. The passages have not been carefully examined by the light of their context and probable meaning; when they are, they will not be found to bear so strong a testimony to the necessity of Fasting Communion as some would have us believe. If it were so necessary in St. Chrysostom's eyes, it would indeed be a wonder that only two passages could be found on the subject in the voluminous sermons and writings of so eloquent a man, who always seized every passing event to point some exhortation or to found upon it some warning. His homilies abound with references and allusions to the prevailing habits of his time, much more so than any other of the fathers. It would be strange, therefore, if he laid so much stress upon Fasting Communion, that he did not more frequently insist upon the custom.

The first passage quoted is from one of the homilies on the First Epistle to the Corinthians. The whole context has been before quoted in the chapter about fasting after Communion, but the passage quoted is the following: ²—

¹ Giustiniani on I Cor. xi. 20: *In omnes B. Pauli Epistolas*, 1612, tom. i. p. 561. Bona, *Opera*, ed. Sala, 1749, ii. p. 108. Cozza, *Tractatus Dogmatico-moralis de Jejunio Ecclesiastico*, Romæ, 1724, p. 2, &c.

² *Opera*, Parisiis, tom. x. p. 248 C. See above, p. 179.

Σὺ δὲ πρὶν ἢ μὲν μεταλαβεῖν
νηστεύεις, ἵνα ὅπωςδήποτε ἄξιός
φανῇς τῆς κοινωνίας.

But *you before* you partake
fast, that somehow or other
you may show yourself worthy
of Communion.

And there the quotation stops, while the grammatical construction would lead the meaning farther on. But if the whole passage be examined, it will be seen that the orator is not speaking of a technical fast from midnight (which, indeed, was probably unknown for the first ten or eleven centuries), but of the previous fast of some day or days, whether of Lent, or the stations, or the vigil of a festival. Next he says that the fast after Communion is of more consequence than previous temperance, clearly showing that it is of self-restraint in the matter of food he is speaking, and not of any mere material preparation of body or mouth.

If we compare the passage with its own context, or with other passages in St. Chrysostom or contemporary writers, it will be found that the language is precisely that used of the Lenten fast making *worthy* for the Easter Communion, or the previous ecclesiastical fast preparing for the festival Communion.

First, then, from the context of the passage. The preacher is arguing earnestly against the habit of feasting even to excess on the festival day after they had communicated. He says that his hearers would have to bear the blame which the Apostle laid on the Corinthians, as they transgressed in a similar manner: for St. Chrysostom differed from St. Augustine in thinking that the excess of the Corinthians was subsequent to their Communion. He is specially speaking of festival Communions before which there was a fasted eve. St. Basil in his powerful and persuasive homilies of fasting tried to allure the luxurious by saying that their dainties would taste much better after a course of fasting; so St. Chrysostom says that a previous fast prepared for a day of excess:—

Let us all listen to these words, as many as come to this sacred Table with the poor. When we leave we do not seem to have seen them; but also we get drunk and hurry by the hungry; of which the Corinthians were accused. And when does this happen? says he. Always, indeed, and specially at festivals, when specially it ought not. For even then after Communion drunkenness succeeds, and contempt of the poor; and when you have received the Blood, which should be a time of fasting and soberness to you, you play drunken tricks and make merry. . . .

You indeed fast *before* you partake, that somehow or other you may show yourself worthy of the Communion; but when you *have* received, and ought to protract your temperance, you ruin all. Yet indeed it is not of equal importance to fast before and after, for indeed you ought to be temperate at both times, but specially *after* you have received the Bridegroom: *before* that you may be worthy to receive, and *after* that you may not show yourself unworthy of what you received.

Here, then, remark that it was what modern writers would call an ecclesiastical fast of which the saint is speaking: for he says that their *temperance* should be protracted after the act of Communion; hence he spoke of temperance, or the ecclesiastical fast before, and not the 'natural' fast from midnight. Again, he says that communicants are bound to be *temperate* before and after, which distinctly shows that what the preacher had in his mind at the time was the antecedent fast of one or more days, the ecclesiastical fast, self-restraint in the matter of food, which, as he elsewhere implies, procures forgiveness of sins. The context of the passage then distinctly shows that it is the ecclesiastical fast, and not the (so-called) natural fast which was then spoken of by the orator.

The same will be seen if we compare with the passage other sayings of St. Chrysostom and his contemporaries. In the very next homily there is a passage which throws much light on the meaning: ¹—

Therefore, when we hear all this, let us take great care of the

¹ In *Epist. I. ad Cor.* Hom. xxviii. *Opera*, tom. x. 253 B.

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poor, and restrain our appetites, and refrain from drunkenness, and study to receive the mysteries *worthily*.

This must be intended of an ecclesiastical fast, self-restraint, that is, in matter of food ; the same word being used for *worthy* reception. In similar manner St. Chrysostom, urging to an honest keeping of the Lenten fast, ends his first homily on Genesis with these words : ¹—

Thinking over all this, beloved, and making much account of our own salvation, let us despise worthless and harmful luxury ; let us embrace the fast and all other self-restraint, and let us show forth much change of life, and daily press on to the performance of good works ; so that having traded in spiritual merchandize the whole season of Holy Lent, and having heaped up much wealth of virtue, we may thus have been *made worthy* both to arrive at the Lord's Day [Easter] and to approach with boldness the awful and spiritual Table, and to share with our conscience clean those ineffable and eternal good things, and to be filled with the graces that flow from thence.

Here, then, is the same expression that the ecclesiastical fast *makes worthy* to approach the Holy Table. Nor are these at all isolated passages. At the beginning of the thirtieth homily on Genesis a similar passage occurs. By this time Holy Week has arrived, and the saint takes the opportunity of urging to stricter fasting and self-denial. He says that athletes are more careful in training as the day of actual contest approaches, and sailors are more careful as they steer into harbour ; so should Christians be more careful about their observance of Holy Week.²

In the same manner must we, since we have by the grace of God come to this Great Week, specially extend the course of our fast, and offer our prayers more earnestly, and exhibit the confession of our sins ample and accurate, . . . so that with these acts of rectitude coming to the Lord's Day [Easter] we may enjoy the liberality of the Lord.

¹ Hom. I. in Genes. cap. i. tom. iv. p. 7 A.

² Hom. XXX. in Cap. x. Genes. tom. iv. p. 294 A.

At a similar time the saint was addressing the people of Antioch, in the course of homilies preached on the occasion of their throwing down the statues of the Emperor ; and he uses the same kind of argument :¹—

For this cause are fasting, and Lent, and the series of so many days, and sermons, and prayers, and teachings, that having by every means wiped off our sins of the whole year by this zeal for God's commandments, we may with spiritual boldness scrupulously partake of that unbloody sacrifice ; since if this be not done, in vain and to no purpose did we undergo so much labour.

And again in another connection, but in the same spirit, he² says :—

For we fast not because of the Pascha, nor because of the Cross, but because of our sins, since we are about to approach the Mysteries.

In similar strain, when the saint is exhorting his hearers to communicate at Christmas, he says he does not wish them to come simply because of the feast, but with careful preparation.³

I say this now because I know that many at any rate will approach on that day and rush heedlessly upon that spiritual sacrifice. In order, then, that we do this not for harm, not for the condemnation of our soul, but for salvation, I therefore now testify beforehand, and exhort you, that purging yourselves by every means you so approach the holy mysteries. And let no man say to me, 'I am full of shame, I have my conscience teeming with sins, I bear an intolerable burden,' for the fixed period of these five days, if you are temperate, and pray and watch, is sufficient to cut away the mass of your sins.

From these passages we see that the fast before the festival was regarded as the preparation for the festival Communion. Thus there was in some sort a guarantee that there should be some reminder of the necessity of

¹ *Ad Pop. Antioch.* Hom. xx. *Opera*, tom. ii. p. 199 A.

² *Hom. contra Judæos*, iii. *Opera*, tom. i. p. 611 E.

³ *Hom. de Beato Philogonio*, *Opera*, tom. i. p. 498 C.

preparation for that highest and most awful act of Christian worship. Nay, this was the very reason, according to St. Chrysostom, why the forty days of the Lenten fast were appointed: according to him it was for no other purpose than for the purpose of having some regular preparation for the Easter Communion. It is no matter for the present purpose to enquire whether the opinion of St. Chrysostom was likely to be right,¹ or whether it was the invention of the eloquent preacher on the spur of the moment. It shows that in the mind of St. Chrysostom there was the fixed persuasion that the previous fast of Lent, or of the Vigils, prepared for the succeeding festival Communion: ²—

Why, then, says he, do we fast these forty days? Well, in ancient times many approached the mysteries carelessly and just as it chanced, and specially at this time when Christ instituted them. The Fathers, then, perceiving the harm that arose from unprepared approach, met together and formed the scheme of forty days of fasting, praying, hearing, church-going, so that we all being cleansed in these days with attention, and by means of prayers, and almsgiving, and fasting, and vigils, and tears, and all the rest, might so approach with a clean conscience so far as lay in our power. And that they established a great point when by their condescension they settled us into a habit of fasting is manifest from this. For if *we* continue through the whole year crying out and preaching a fast, no one gives heed to what is said; but if only the time of Lent comes, though no one exhorts or advises, yet even he that is most excessively dull is excited.

From these passages, which perhaps are sufficient for the purpose, though they might easily be multiplied,³ it is

¹ St. Chrysostom's disciple, St. John Cassian, seems to have held the same opinion as his master—viz. that Lent was not Apostolical, but was instituted because of disorders in the Church (col. xxi. cap. xxx. *Opera*, Atrebat, 1628, p. 805). But this is contrary to the opinion of other Fathers; cf. Bishop Beveridge's discussion of the whole question, *Codex Canonum*, 1678, p. 337.

² *In eos qui Pascha jejunant*, *Opera*, tom. i. p. 611 c.

³ Other passages may be found as follows; *De Seraphinis*, Hom. vi. tom. vi. p. 142 A, preached just before Lent: 'Fasts are because of the mysteries; for just as the end and object of the contests in the Olympian games is the crown, so the end and object of the fast is the pure Communion.' Hom. xvii.

manifest that St. Chrysostom held that the preceding fast of Lent was that which made a man somehow worthy of the Easter Communion; and that the fast preceding the festival prepared for the festival Communion. For he held that a true fast of five days wiped off a mass of sins.¹ Indeed, his teaching seems to have been much the same as that of John Johnson, who was hardly in error when he wrote,²—

They who received thrice, twice, or once a week had no reason to doubt but, by abstaining every Wednesday and Friday till three o'clock in the afternoon (which was then the general practice), they did what was sufficient as to this particular [of fasting before Communion].

That is to say, if a man was of fasting *habit*, that was sufficient preparation for Communion in the matter of fasting.

Elsewhere, too, we find the same reference to the Lenten fast making worthy to approach the altar. Thus we find some such expressions in the Paschal letters of Theophilus of Alexandria (the contemporary and jealous opponent of St. Chrysostom) as they are preserved to us in the Latin translation of St. Jerome:³—

And God giving us strength, let us more strictly fast, laying the foundation of the greater week, that is, of Holy Week, on the thirteenth of the month Pharmuth; so that exactly, according to evangelical traditions, we finish our fasts on the eighteenth day of the foresaid month Pharmuth at dead of night. And on the next day, which is the memorial of the Lord's Resurrection, that

in *Ep. ad Hebraeos*, cap. x. tom. xii. p. 169 D: 'Tell me, you who partake once a year, do you think that the forty days suffice for the cleansing of your sins?'

¹ This was at that time the teaching of all the Fathers. Compare St. Epiphanius: 'The fast has not been ordained for us that we should gratify Him that suffered for us: but that for our own salvation we should confess the Passion of our Lord, which He Himself underwent for our sakes; and that our fastings might be reckoned by God on behalf of our sins.' Above, p. 262.

² *Works*, Anglo-Catholic Library, vol. ii. 'Addenda and Corrigenda to Part II.'

³ S. Hieronymi *Opera*, Veronæ, 1734, tom. i. col. 574 c, Ep. xcvi.

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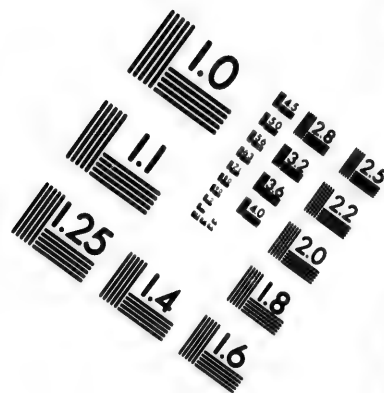
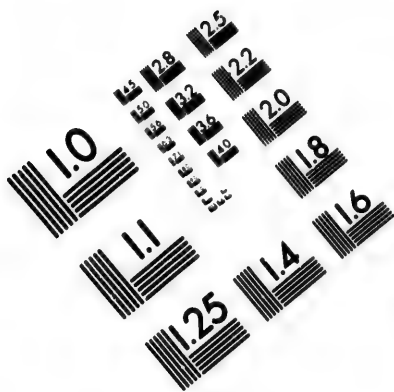
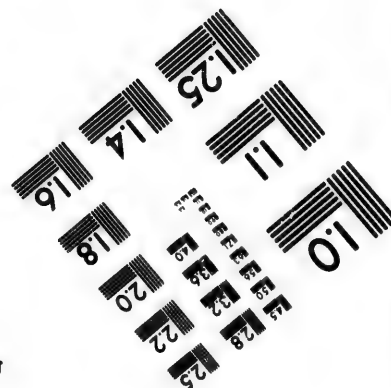
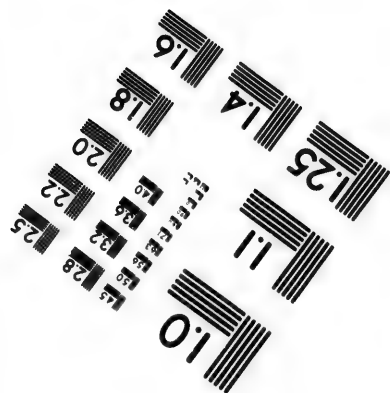
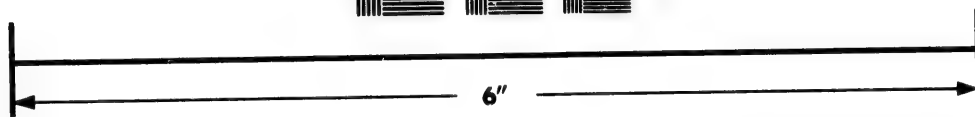
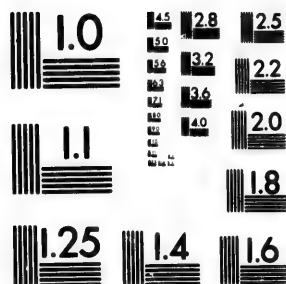


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is, on the nineteenth day of the same month, let us celebrate the true Passover; adding to these the seven remaining weeks in which the feast of Pentecost is involved, and *making ourselves worthy* of the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Nor in the two homilies of fasting which St. Basil has left is the same reference omitted. These are written with the evident intention of persuading men to the Lenten fast, or at all events to that of Holy Week. This is seen in the reference at the end of the first homily to Easter and Good Friday: while in the second homily St. Basil speaks of the five days' fast—that is, the Lenten fast of each week—which was broken by the recurring festivals of Saturday and Sunday. In the first homily he says:¹—

Do you know Who it is you are about to receive? He that promised us, 'I and the Father will come and will make our abode with him.' Why, then, do you first take up the ground with drunkenness, and block up the entrance to the Lord? Why do you urge the enemy to preoccupy your strongholds? Drunkenness does not receive the Lord, drunkenness chases away the Holy Spirit. For indeed smoke chases away bees, and the fumes of drunkenness chase away spiritual gifts.

In the second homily² the same reference is seen:—

The Lord receives the faster within the holy chancel. He receives not him that is full of excess, as profane and unholy. For if you come to-morrow smelling of wine and that rancid, how shall I reckon your crapula for fasting? Do not think it is because you have not just been pouring in unmixed wine, but because you are not pure from wine.

¹ *De Jejunio*, i. § 11; *Opera*, ed. Gaume, 1839, tom. ii. p. 13. The same nearly is expressed in St. Gregory Nazianzene: 'For example, just before His temptation He fasted, so do we before Easter. The matter of the fasts is the same, but the difference of the two times is not small: for He opposed these fasts against His temptation; but with us it signifies the dying with Christ, and is a *purification before a feast*.'—*Orat. xl. De Baptismo*; *Opera*, Paris, 1609, tom. i. p. 659.

² *De Jejunio*, Hom. ii. § 4, ed. Gaume, tom. ii. p. 17.

From these passages it is clear that St. Basil thought of the ecclesiastical fast as preparing for Communion.¹

Prudentius also, who in Spain was contemporaneous with St. Chrysostom at Constantinople, seems to refer to the previous 'ecclesiastical' fast as preparing the heart or soul for Communion:—

Parcis victibus expedita corda
Infusum melius Deum receptant :
Hinc pastus animæ est, saporque verus.²

In St. Leo, too, we may find some intimation of a similar opinion, though, as would be expected, he is far more precise in uttering his condensed thoughts in well-balanced language. He rarely speaks of corporal fasting without explaining in the immediate context that the spiritual fast from sin is that which gives efficacy to the corporal fast. In his sixth Lenten sermon³ he says:—

Ye, dearly beloved, who are about to celebrate the Passover of the Lord, do you so exercise yourselves by holy fasts, that being free from all troubles you may come to the most holy feast.

From every reason, then, from the immediate context of the passage, and from light thrown upon it from similar passages from other Fathers near about the same time, it may be concluded that it was to the ecclesiastical, and not to the so-called 'natural,' fast that St. Chrysostom was referring when he spoke the words under discussion,

¹ St. Ambrose, who is a great imitator of St. Basil, from whom he borrows a great deal in his book *De Elia et Jejunio*, has reference to the Lenten fast as preparing for the Communion. He has been urging to the Lenten fast, and he goes on, 'The mystic table, too, is prepared with fasting; that table of which David says, Thou hast prepared a table before me against them that trouble me. This table is purchased at the price of fasting, and that cup, inebriating with sobriety, is sought by the thirst of heavenly sacraments'—*De Elia et Jejunio*, cap. x.

² Prudentius (cir. A.D. 405), *Cathemerinon* IV. *Post cibum*, l. 34, *Opera*, Romæ, 1788, tom. i. p. 277. The word *infusum* probably refers to a custom of giving both species simultaneously (cf. '*infundatur ori ejus Eucharistia*,' Co. Carthag. IV. can. lxxvi. A.D. 398): it is possible that the *pastus* refers to the Bread, and the *sapor* to the Wine. See above, p. 14, note 1.

³ *Sermo* xliii. In *Quad.* vi. *Opera*, Parisiis, 1675, tom. i. p. 223.

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You fast before you communicate, so that somehow or other
you may show yourself worthy of Communion.

But if the rigorists remain still unconvinced by my
arguments and parallel passages, what meaning will they
attach to the following saying of St. Chrysostom? —

He who is not fasting, if he approach with a clear conscience,
keeps the Passover, whether he receive the Communion to-day or
to-morrow or whenever he does.

If the one passage is to bear a modern technical sense,
why should not the other also? It must be remarked
that it is the present participle, *ὁ μὴ νηστεύων*, just as
in the other passage it is *νηστεύεις*—it is not the past, *ὁ μὴ
νηστεύσας* or the like: it is he that is not fasting, not he
that has not been fasting. The passage clearly allows that
if a man have a clear conscience he may partake of the
Blessed Sacrament worthily and with reverence, whether
he be fasting or not, whatever meaning be attached to the
word fasting. The antecedent fast was evidently regarded
by St. Chrysostom as a means of making the conscience
clear, and not as a means in itself of showing reverence to
the Sacrament conveyed to us in food. There was no
idea of 'a symbolic fast beginning with a symbolic day,'
as some say now-a-days. If the conscience be not clear,
the fasting would be of no avail: if it be clear, fasting
was not required for a reverent reception of the Blessed
Sacrament. The chief and main object of the previous
ecclesiastical fast was to render the conscience clear; as
St. Basil said of Elijah, 'having cleansed his soul by fasting
forty days, he was thus thought worthy in the cave at
Horeb to see, so far as man can see, the Lord Almighty.'

Indeed, on this point the mind of St. Chrysostom, as
expressed in his writings, does not seem to have been so

¹ *In eos qui Pascha jejulant*, *Opera*, tom. i. p. 612 B.

very far removed from that of our own ascetic, the pious and stern Kettlewell, who wrote as follows: ¹—

One keeps away because the day before he was at a feast. . . . The primitive Christians received it at a friendly treat—for in those days their love-feasts always went along with it; so that a hospitable entertainment the day before, yea, or even on the same day, doth not unfit men to communicate, but if in all things else they are duly qualified, they may *worthily* receive still.

But here the second passage from St. Chrysostom will be adduced as proving the general mind of those days. In those troublous times when bishop burned with jealousy against bishop, when men tried to gain preferment to highest dignities by corrupting the principal men about Court, when bishops and priests plotted to depose a bishop from his throne in order to usurp his place, every kind of charge was trumped up against him. A knot of men would coalesce to degrade a bishop, and at once there was a string of charges which generally ran in the same groove—'He baptized after food: He communicated after food: he had a child after he was bishop.' These charges were made against St. Chrysostom; ² and with respect to the first two, he denies the truth of the charge with indignation; and at the same time distinctly says that, if they had been true, there would not have been sufficient ground for his deposition, for the Lord Himself and His disciples would under the same charges be liable to degradation.

It is quite true that a certain amount of doubt has been thrown upon the genuineness of the letter in which the passage occurs from internal evidence; but it may well be that distress of mind and trouble at his exile, which forms the substance of the letter, made St. Chrysostom deviate

¹ *An Help and Exhortation to Worthy Communicating*, by John Kettlewell, 8th Edition, London, 1717, p. 287.

² 'He held private interviews with women; he ate a small cake after Holy Communion; he had administered both Sacraments after he himself or the recipients had eaten,' &c. See Stephens' *Life of St. Chrysostom*, Murray, 1872, p. 327.

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from his usual humility and charity. Indeed, we may suppose that the language in which he speaks of Arsacius, who had intruded into his See at Constantinople, may be understood spiritually or symbolically of one who had interfered between the lawful bishop and his lawful spouse, the Church in his diocese. The objections, then, may be regarded as insufficient to disprove the genuineness of the Epistle. The passage runs as follows: '—

Many things they dressed up against me, and say that I had communicated some after they had eaten. And, if I did this, may my name be wiped out of the list of Bishops, and not be written in the book of the orthodox faith; for if I did this, Christ shall cast me out of His kingdom. But if they once say this to me, and are contentious, let them degrade Paul, who after supper baptized a whole household: let them degrade the Lord Himself, who after supper gave the Communion to His Apostles.

Now, first of all we must observe that this quite overthrows the notion of a 'natural' fast being supposed. For, however we may smile at the strange attempts made to show that the consecration of the Bread by our Lord came on the other side of midnight from the last Supper, there is no question that the baptism of the jailor at Philippi was after midnight. It was at midnight that 'Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises to God.' Consequent upon this followed the earthquake, and the opening the prison doors, and the release of St. Paul and Silas, and the preaching the Gospel to the jailor and his household, and the washing the Apostles' stripes: all this was before the baptism. If, then, the particular law against which St. Chrysostom was said to have offended was that he had communicated men who had eaten after midnight, it would have been no answer at all to have brought forward the case of St. Paul baptizing men, who had certainly been too much alarmed and stirred to the heart to think about taking food after midnight. This passage, therefore, shows

¹ *Epistola* 125, *Opera*, Parisiis, tom. iii. p. 668 D.

decisively that it was no technical 'natural' fast that was spoken of; that is, the abstaining from all food after the first or last stroke of midnight.

Next it is seen that St. Chrysostom clearly and scornfully asserts, that though as a matter of fact he had not done this, yet if he had it was no matter of degradation. Nay, the language used shows that he did not think it was wrong in itself to give the Sacraments after food, since he shows that the Lord Himself had done so with one Sacrament, and the Apostle of the Gentiles, the chosen vessel, had done so with the other Gospel Sacrament. This implies what he has been found to say elsewhere, that accidental dispositions of body need not in themselves render a man unfit to communicate. Elsewhere he has said, 'he who is not fasting, if he approach with a clear conscience, keeps the Passover, whether he receives the Communion to-day or to-morrow or whenever he does.' Where he clearly shows that in his mind the purity of conscience was the only *requisite* for reverent and proper Communion, and that fasting was a means to the cleansing of the conscience.

Again, observe that St. Chrysostom does not regard the question of eating or not as one peculiar to the Holy Eucharist; for he defends his position by adducing the example of St. Paul baptizing after supper. There could have been no question in his mind of symbolic reverence to the Sacrament which conveys grace by means of food: there could be no question of the Lord's portion being the first food on the day of Communion, because then the example of St. Paul baptizing after food would have been wholly and entirely beside the mark. No, St. Chrysostom regarded the previous fast as necessary to the purification of the conscience, and the rule was as necessary for the one Sacrament as it was for the other. This is also seen in the manner in which he rebuts the accusation that he had baptized after food. For he uses precisely the same line

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of argument.¹ This time his defence is in his own Patriarchal Cathedral, and his sermon is clearly received with immense applause in church, showing that his argument is one which the people accepted and approved of:—

They say 'Thou didst eat and baptize.' If I did so, I will be accursed : let me not be numbered in the roll of Bishops : may I never be with the angels : may I never please God ! But if I did eat and baptize, I did nothing unseasonable to these things. [Here there must have been great applause, for he goes on—] Attend, I pray, with accuracy to what I say, and I will not stop speaking. *For me, indeed, to speak is not grievous, but for you it is safe.* But let us return to our subject. They say I ate and baptized. Well, let them depose Paul, because he gave the grace of Baptism to the jailor after supper. I dare to say it, let them depose even Christ Himself, because after supper He gave the grace of the Communion to His disciples. [Here again there must have been a great outburst of applause to explain the following words—] Really this is becoming and great for you: this is a bright token of peace : this is the panegyric of the people. It is my crown and your fruit.

Here, again, St. Chrysostom, speaking of Baptism, uses precisely the same argument that he had before used about communicating others after food. He uses language no less strong to express his view of the falsity of the accusation. It is impossible to say that he uses stronger language to rebut the accusation of communicating others after food, than he does about baptizing after food. The examples he adduces are precisely the same, and in either case he brings forward the example of administration of *both* Sacraments after food as his warranty, if he had done what his enemies accused him of doing. It is quite evident, then, from St. Chrysostom's writings that he placed the two Gospel Sacraments in the same category in this respect. He therefore gives no countenance, to say the least, to the assertion that 'the reason for Fasting Communion was *always*, that it is a custom of reverence for the Blessed

¹ *Sermo antequam iret in Exilium*, § 4, Parisiis, tom. iii. p. 417 E.

Sacrament : that as God is pleased to give us this great gift by means of food which we receive with our mouth, we should not take any common food for some hours before it.' This cannot be said of Baptism : it cannot be said of Confirmation : it cannot be said of Ordination : it cannot be said of taking an oath. Yet the rule was the same for all ; and for the same reason. There was in the decadence of discipline, which commenced when the Emperor and the Court became Christian, a danger of taking food to excess if they began to take it at all. There was also the firm conviction that fasting was efficacious for the cleansing of the soul, and so prepared or helped other acts of discipline and mortification to prepare the man for the approach to the solemn ordinance of religion.

The Church of England in her undoubted right as being an integral part of the Church Catholic, a true National Church, has retained the rule of fasting before adult baptism. But this is a single act in a man's life. Her endeavour was in her reformation to introduce the habit of more frequent Communion, and it would seem, therefore, that she regarded the weekly fast of Friday, with the yearly fast of Lent, and the periodical fasts of Vigils and Ember-tides, as sufficient preparation (as John Johnson says) for Communion by way of fasting.

If the National Church of Africa had the right, fifteen hundred years ago, to lay down the rule of celebrating before the taking of the *prandium*, with the single exception of Maundy Thursday, the National Church of England had the right to relax the rule three hundred years ago. The ascetic celibate Kettlewell thought it not binding ; the giant of orthodoxy John Johnson even argued against it. The pious digamist Bishop Jeremy Taylor approved of it. The bitter canons against the marriage of the clergy in the West affected him not : the stern reprobation of married bishops in East and West moved him not : the still more

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severe denunciations of digamist clergy troubled him not.¹ To him the Church of England had power to relax these rules of discipline. Then she had power also to relax the rule of discipline with respect to the obligation of the so-called 'natural' fast before the act of Communion.

To sum up the testimony of St. Chrysostom. He regards fasting as very advisable and ordinarily necessary before Communion for the purpose of mortification, and preparing the *soul* for the reception of grace. Fasting cleanses the *soul* and makes it worthy of Communion. But it is possible for one who is not fasting to receive worthily. He denies, indeed, ever having administered either Gospel Sacrament after food, but asserts, amidst the applause of his flock, that if he had done so, he would have been justified by the example of the Lord Himself and His Apostle St. Paul.

There has been nothing yet adduced from St. Chrysostom which at all shows he regarded a fast from all food from midnight as necessary for *bodily* preparation for a reverent Communion: nor has anything yet been discovered in his writings to justify the relentless extravagance of the language of such writers as Mr. Oxenham.

¹ It is interesting to see how he meets them: 'It were not unseasonable to consider the ecclesiastical law against the second marriage of priests, or the ordaining them who have married the second time. But this also relying upon the *humour of men*, who will be more pure than God, and more righteous than the law of Christ, and more wise than the Apostles, it may be determined by the same considerations. The law is a snare, it is an incompetent matter,' &c. —*Ductor Dubitantium*, bk. iii. chap. iv. § 29, ed. Eden, vol. x. p. 437.

CHAPTER XII.

ST. AUGUSTINE. DIED A.D. 430.

Chronological Table.

A.D.

- 389. St. Augustine, still a layman, acknowledges and deplors the existence of gluttony and drunkenness, especially at the tombs of the martyrs.
- 390. SECOND COUNCIL OF CARTHAGE says that it has passed decrees to be kept by the Catholic Church.
- 392. St. Augustine, now a priest, writes to his friend Aurelius, lately consecrated Bishop of Carthage, Metropolitan of Africa, imploring him by means of a council to take steps to stop these disorders, and at all events to begin by confining drunkenness and gluttony to private houses.
- 393. COUNCIL OF HIPPO under Aurelius passes canons against the clergy feasting in taverns, against celebrating otherwise than fasting, and against feasting in Church.
- 395. St. Augustine writes to his friend Bishop Alypius to tell him how his attempts to stop these scandals are succeeding.
- 397. THIRD COUNCIL OF CARTHAGE re-enacts and re-enforces the canons of the Council of Hippo.
- 400. St. Augustine writes the famous letter to Januarius on the question of the Maundy recognized by the Council of Hippo.
- 419. St. Augustine present at a COUNCIL OF CARTHAGE, which again passes the Hippo Canons, the question of Fasting Communion or celebration being specially mooted by the Bishops legate of Mauritania Sitiphensis.

SECTION I.—*Historical Introduction.*

The passage on which most stress has been laid is from a letter of St. Augustine to one Januarius. This is quoted

by everyone (or nearly so) who has spoken or written on the subject at all for the last thousand years, and gives proof of the transcending influence of this great Saint over the minds of Christian men. For some seven centuries this seemed the one stock quotation which was to satisfy all doubts. But the passage has been hardly dealt by, for it has been made to bear more than the context will justify. No less a person than St. Thomas himself has made it bear a meaning the exact opposite to that originally intended. He argues from the passage that the Maundy before reception had been abrogated, whereas in the Epistle St. Augustine distinctly and unquestionably acknowledges and admits the feast before Communion on Maundy Thursday. It seems almost certain, though it is hard to believe, that St. Thomas knew the passage only from the small extract in the *Decretum* of Gratian.

In order really to approach the investigation of the passage properly, it will be well to enter upon it historically. Some attempt at this has been already made, but now the history must be followed out.

The Manicheans argued against the truth of the Catholic Church from the superstitions and luxury of the mass of her members. St. Augustine met the argument by instancing the self-denying and holy lives of the clergy and anchorets, and monks, and nuns living in community. These, he says, for fasting, for self-denial, for holy life, are a match for any that the Manicheans could show. He then says that the Church does all in her power to correct the evils which are excepted against, and therefore she is not to be held answerable for what she deplores and is struggling to amend :—

I know there are many who adore pictures and sepulchres. I know there are many who most luxuriously drink over the dead, and, holding out feasts to corpses, bury themselves over those who are buried, and put down their drunkenness and gluttony to religion.¹

¹ *De Moribus Ecclesie*, lib. i. § 75, *Opera*, Parisiis, 1689, tom. i. col. 713.

This was written in the year A.D. 389, before St. Augustine was ordained priest. But soon afterwards, notwithstanding his efforts to avoid it, he was caught by the people, and presented to the gentle and good Bishop Valerius of Hippo for ordination. Here was a new and awful responsibility which he had been seeking to avoid, and he was brought face to face with this question of profaning the Church itself and the places of the Sacrament with gluttony and drunkenness. His own Bishop, Valerius, was aged, and unable to cope with the disorders that were rampant; and he looked to the priest Augustine to regulate and rule the Church, intending as soon as possible to have him consecrated bishop, to succeed him at Hippo in the event of his death.

Soon the opportunity offered for which St. Augustine had been waiting. His friend Aurelius, the deacon of Carthage, had been elected and consecrated Bishop of Carthage, a see which conveyed with it the post of Metropolitan of Africa, and was indeed almost equal to a patriarchal see. In answer to a letter from Bishop Aurelius, soon after his consecration, St. Augustine¹ earnestly reminds the Metropolitan that he was the one to amend the terrible scandal and profanity, since he had severely condemned it while deacon, and now he was Metropolitan. He says that for his part he thinks the evil so deeply seated, and so widely spread, that nothing but a council can produce any good results. Still, if there was to be a reformation undertaken in the various dioceses separately without synodal authority, Carthage must in all seriousness set the example: for then others would follow, but it would be hopeless to attempt any reform while Carthage remained uncorrected.

In this letter St. Augustine recommends a certain policy, that at first the excess be kept out of Church, away from the places of the Sacraments, and the tombs of the

¹ Ep. xxii. (al. 64), *Opera*, Parisiis, 1688, tom. ii. col. 27.

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martyrs; and that the oblations for the dead should be made less expensive and afforded to all without fee; and if any man offered money, it should be at once dispensed to the poor.

This letter was written A.D. 392. It reveals a state of things much similar to that of the Irish wake: and there has been already seen reason for thinking that this excess and riot was at least sometimes before the celebration of the Blessed Sacrament.¹ No wonder that St. Augustine was deeply anxious about the amendment of such profanity.

The very next year, viz. A.D. 393, the council asked for by St. Augustine was held at Hippo, probably out of respect for the priest of Hippo, St. Augustine himself. The Metropolitan Aurelius came from Carthage to preside, and Augustine was appointed to preach before the assembled bishops. This was most unusual for a priest; but the bishops were so much struck with the discourse, that it was at their desire formed into a treatise and issued under the title 'De Fide et Symbolo.' This shows the part he was likely to take in influencing the deliberations of the council.

This council passed very many canons of discipline of such value, that the concise form of the canons, the *Breviarium Hipponense*, was constantly read and re-enacted at council after council of Africa. It would almost seem that this must have been due to the benefit derived from the neighbourhood of such a man as Augustine, who could help the president Aurelius with his counsel, though he could not be present to vote at the synod. With St. Augustine's letter before us, we can almost trace the policy of the bishops assembled at Hippo. They determine to do all in their power to check the scandal of disorderly conduct; but to do so by degrees, by excluding it from the most sacred persons, places, and things. Stringent laws are therefore passed about the clergy, with an earnest dissuasion to hinder the laity from feasting in church. Canon

¹ See above, p. 55 seq.

26 prohibits the clergy from eating or drinking in taverns; canon 28 prohibits the clergy from celebrating if they have taken the *prandium*, with one only exception, viz. Maundy Thursday; canon 29 prohibits the clergy and dissuades the laity from feasting in church. Here is the policy mapped out pretty well by St. Augustine. The bishops do what they can to hinder the scandal by degrees. The canons can affect the clergy directly: these therefore they bind strictly. With the laity, the 'imperita plebs' spoken of by St. Augustine, they deal gently, and only dissuade them, leaving it to the clergy to lead them gradually to better things.

This council was evidently a great help to St. Augustine, and he at once set himself to carry out the spirit of its reformation. We have a most interesting letter from him to his friend Bishop Alypius,¹ giving an account of an earnest attempt he made to persuade the Catholics of Hippo to give over having a great feast in the Cathedral. The blessed result after much anxiety was, that while the Donatists were prolonging their drinking bout in their conventicle, there was a pious chanting of psalms in the Catholic Cathedral. Thus the darkness of the error of the schism was enhanced by the pureness of the Catholic worship.

The Canons of Hippo had some effect, but they were not sufficiently observed. Whether it was that it was a local council, or from some other reason, the canons were not well kept. At a council of Carthage held A.D. 397, under Aurelius, the canons were re-enacted and enforced with the greater sanction of a national council. St. Augustine was now a bishop, and was probably present at this council. It is true that the canons, as we have them,

¹ Ep. xxix. Parisiis, 1688, tom. ii. col. 48. The remarkable thing is that St. Augustine has no reference in this epistle to the Council of Hippo held at his own request two years before. He clearly kept this in the background of his appeal to the people, having it in reserve as a last resource.

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are evidently much out of order, and are, as Van Espen says, a farrago of canons, still we may take for granted that there was a Council of Carthage¹ at this time which re-enacted the Canons of Hippo. Some think that St. Augustine was the author of one canon now passed, but this has been doubted.

There is one point which must be here noticed in passing. The Canons of Hippo and Carthage either commence with the word 'placuit,' or with the dependent conjunction 'ut.' This, as St. Athanasius has argued,² implies that the canon is something new. At all events, it implies deliberation, voting, and acceptance of something which might have been rejected.

In the year A.D. 400, three years after this third Council of Carthage, St. Augustine wrote the letter to Januarius which is the subject of this chapter. Some persons had been travelling, and it was found that the customs on Maundy Thursday differed very much indeed in various churches. In some places they observed the Lenten fast and did not take the *prandium*; in other places the Lenten fast was broken, and the *Dominica Cæna* or anniversary feast was made the excuse of breaking the Lenten strictness. Then, again, in some churches there were two celebrations in the day, which was contrary to the general rule that there should be only one celebration at the one altar in the church. These variations exercised the mind of Januarius very much, and he wrote to St. Augustine to know what was to be done in the matter.

Now, it is a great pity that we have not the letter of Januarius. If we had, probably there would be some

¹ This is seen from the language of Mizonius, chief Bishop of Byzacena, in his letter read by Aurelius at the Council of Carthage about A.D. 419: 'When for the sake of ecclesiastical utility we were met together at Carthage, it was suggested by very many that those things which some time ago were matured at the Council of Hippo were not at all kept by some with unbridled rashness.'

² See above, p. 62.

question of the strictness of the Lenten fast seeming to clash with the Canon of Hippo and Carthage, which acknowledged or entailed the Maundy. For St. Augustine evidently alludes to this when he says that he personally recommends the three o'clock refection, which would not break the Lenten fast, to be taken as the anniversary *Cena Domini*; wherefore, as there was this way of meeting both difficulties, he says, 'WE compel none to take the *prandium* before that anniversary Maundy, nor dare WE forbid any to do so.' The plural with the strong verb 'cogimus,' contrasted with the previous 'arbitror,' seems to show that the Canon of Hippo enforced by the bishops implies the compulsion, whereas the personal interpretation of St. Augustine harmonizes the canon with the Lenten strictness. That this canon is present to the mind of St. Augustine throughout the epistle is very evident, from his arguing that the Church was not to be blamed for making the rule that the Blessed Sacrament was to be celebrated by fasting men, though the Lord and His Apostles were not fasting; nor was the Church to be blamed for the Maundy, for there was evidently no Apostolic rule either way. The immediate juxtaposition of the Maundy and Fasting Communion in the epistle is clearly due to their connection in the Canon of Hippo, as there is nothing in the questions of Januarius that would necessarily call for this argument of St. Augustine. Again, it is evident that this canon is present to his mind from his using the words 'Placuit Spiritui Sancto,' with respect to the enactment of the Hippo Canon, the words used in his time for the decree of the Apostolic Council in the Acts, and the 'placuit' being the form of the canons passed at Hippo and Carthage, while the rule being attributed to the Holy Spirit is the common language applied to councils.

This being the case, it was necessary that this historical introduction should be prefixed to the full consideration of the letter, as this expression 'Placuit Spiritui Sancto' has been so much misunderstood and therefore misused.

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The text of the letter is given in full, so far as it at all bears on the passage generally quoted, with a literal translation: but an argument and analysis have been prefixed, and some notes too long to be placed under the text have been subjoined.

From a consideration of the letter, it will be seen that St. Augustine does not lay down the rule which has been inferred from a partial interpretation of a small extract. He expresses a strong opinion that each man should show himself to be a peaceful son of the Church under which he lived, by accepting her rule without controversy. He condemns those who travel, and seek to introduce foreign customs into their own Church with a prospect of infructuous disturbance. This is a strong assertion of the independence of particular Churches, and is a condemnation of those who seek to impose upon members of our Church the rubrics of 'transmarine' office books.

SECTION 2.—*Argument.*

Erasmus was a great admirer of St. Augustine. In the prefatory letter to his edition of the works of the great father he shows in how great estimation he held them. Yet when his attention is drawn aside from the feeling of admiration and gratitude for the exhibition of sanctity in the life of St. Augustine, and of power and charity in his writings, then Erasmus is fain to confess that the reader of St. Augustine is often offended by a perplexed, embarrassed, and obscure style. In the letter dedicatory prefixed to the edition published by him of the works of St. Cyprian, Erasmus says that, alone of all the ecclesiastical writers of Africa, St. Cyprian had a pure and easy style. 'Though of old' (he writes) 'Africa produced many renowned for eloquence and doctrine, amongst whom Tertullian and Augustine stand first, yet scarce any save Cyprian had the genuine purity of the Roman style. I

speaking of ecclesiastical writers, else Lactantius were worthy of special exception. For Tertullian, though he be solid and subtle in his opinions, yet his style is difficult and obscure, and even somewhat rugged, as Jerome intimates in his letter to Paulinus, subscribing to the opinion of Lactantius. In Augustine, again, there is repeatedly offending the reader some perplexed, embarrassed, and obscure style, with which Jerome upbraids him in his letters.¹ This peculiarity is especially seen in this first letter to Januarius. For if St. Thomas himself could quote the letter in condemnation of the Maundy, of which it will be found to approve; if St. Augustine himself gives one reason for the two celebrations on Maundy Thursday at the commencement of the epistle, and a totally different one at the end; if in the concluding summary of the argument of the letter some think that *ante* (that is, *before*) makes best sense, and others read *post* (that is, *after*) without question; there certainly does appear some reason for the assertion that the argument of the epistle cannot run very clearly.

But perhaps in this particular instance there is some reason for this. For the hesitating and at times almost apologetic tone of the letter implies that it was a kind of Eirenikon or persuader to peace between some with each of whom St. Augustine sympathized to a certain extent. The same is seen if we strive to analyse the letter itself.

Januarius evidently was a layman; the manner in which St. Augustine addressed him is sufficient proof of this; and

¹ Porro cum olim Africa permultos ediderit eloquentiâ doctrinâque celebres, inter quos sunt in primis Tertullianus et Augustinus, tamen vix ulli contigit Romanæ dictionis germana puritas præterquam Cypriano. De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis loquor alioqui Lactantius in primis erat excipiendus. Nam Tertullianus licet densus et argutus sit in sententiis, sermo tamen difficilis est et obscurus atque etiam incomptior, quemadmodum indicat Hieronymus in Epistola ad Paulinum, videlicet Lactantii iudicio subscribens. Jam in Augustino subinde lectorem offendit perplexum nescio quid et impeditum et obscurum, quod in Epistolis illi objicit et Hieronymus. — *Epistola dedicatória: Divi Cæcili Cypriani Opera*, jam quartum accuratiori vigilantia a mendis repurgata, Basilee, 1530.

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some manuscripts call him a notary, which may be the embodiment of a trustworthy tradition. The tone of St. Augustine's letter shows that Januarius was an 'aggrieved parishioner' of his day, who was either disturbed and perplexed at some changes which had been introduced into his parish church, or anxious to introduce some changes which he regarded as advantageous. In consequence of this feeling, he wrote to St. Augustine to ask questions on the subjects which troubled him, since the opinion of so great a man would carry great weight. As befitted a Christian bishop, St. Augustine was desirous of peace and charity ; he therefore several times exhorts Januarius to peace and quietness ; and it would almost seem that it is his anxiety to hold the balance even which renders his style perplexed and involved. For in laying down general principles he is clear enough, but when he applies the general principles to the particular case, then it is that he writes under constraint. It is as if he would say, These are the general principles, apply them to your own case for yourself, with all charity and peaceableness.

The matter which St. Augustine deals with in the portion of the letter which affects us is the observance of the African canon about Fasting Communion, and the commemorative *Cena Domini* on Maundy Thursday : and it is impossible to suppose that he is not writing with this canon constantly before his recollection. For seven years before he wrote the letter he had been much concerned with the Council of Hippo, which first formulated the rule on this head ; and four years later he had been present, in all probability, at the Council of Carthage, which re-enacted and confirmed the Canon of Hippo. The main object of St. Augustine's letter is to show that the exception of Maundy Thursday from the rule of Fasting Communion did not necessitate the breach of the Lenten fast. That this was so is seen from the summing up of his argument : 'Wherefore we compel none to take

the *prandium* before that Maundy, yet we dare not forbid any doing so.' That is, the bishops by this Canon of Hippo and Carthage do not enforce a breach of the Lenten fast, yet at the same time they leave it an open question.

From this it would seem that some had objected to the canon as interfering with the proper observance of Lent. This had already been objected to Maundy Thursday at the Council of Laodicea. But it will be asked, how did the canon interfere with Lent, or how did the Maundy break Lent? The answer must be sought for in the wording of the Canon of Hippo. It will be seen that the canon regards *jejunus* and *non pransus*, if not as synonymes, yet as convertible terms.¹ For it says that none are to celebrate except they be *jejuni*, nor in the afternoon if they be *pransi*; if, that is, they have taken the heavy meal of the forenoon. This implies that, in the mind of the canon, *jejunus* and *non pransus* would be the same. But the exception on Maundy Thursday implies that a man need not be *jejunus*; it would follow, therefore, that he might be *pransus*. Now, in the omission or taking of the *prandium* consisted the keeping or breach of the Lenten fast.² If, therefore, the canon allowed a man to be *pransus* when he communicated, it clearly recognized, if not compelled, a

¹ We find in the sixth century, in the sixteenth anathema of the first Council of Braga in Spain (A.D. 563), that some held the Maundy, or at all events they celebrated after a meal, at nine o'clock in the morning, which would be a direct breach of the Lenten strictness.—Bruns, *Canones*, ii. p. 32.

² This is often to be found. Thus St. Paulinus of Nola (A.D. 431) writes: 'Ut solemnitas Paschalis revocavit dies prandiorum,' Ep. xv. For Lent had taken them away. So St. Jerome, speaking of some ascetics who fasted all the year round by only taking one meal. But in the great forty days of Easter, as it was unlawful to fast, they changed their one meal from the afternoon to the morning; they thus took the *prandium*, and therefore kept the ecclesiastical feast, though they took only one meal. 'Jejunium totius anni æquale est excepta Quadragesima in qua sola conceditur districtius vivere. A Pentecoste cæne mutantur in prandia: quo et traditioni Ecclesiasticæ satisfiat et ventrem cibo non onerent duplicato.' (*Opera*, Veronæ, 1734, tom. i. col. 118, Ep. xxii. 35.) St. Caesarius of Arles (A.D. 542) reckons it a venial sin 'quotiens cum corpore sit sanus, aliis jejunantibus prandere voluerit.'—App. St. August. tom. v. col. 186. See also above, p. 132.

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æ, 1734, tom. i. col. 118,
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uerit.'—App. St. August.

breach of the Lenten strictness. This seems to have been the argument of some, or there may have been another ground for supposing that the canon necessitated a breach of Lent. It clearly recognized the 'Lord's Supper;' that is, the Supper in commemoration of the Mystical Supper, at which the institution of the Sacrament of the Eucharist took place. This *Cæna Domini* would, therefore, commonly be taken about five or six o'clock in the evening.¹ But on ordinary fast days in Lent there was, as is evident from St. Augustine's words in this letter, a refectio or light meal at three o'clock. Men may have argued, If we have to wait longer for a meal, even till five or six in the evening, to celebrate the anniversary Lord's Supper, we must take something in the forenoon, which implies taking the *prandium* and dishonouring Lent. Be this as it may, St. Augustine points out that the *Cæna Domini* may be taken at three o'clock, and so the canon need not be held to recognize a breach of Lent: for a man may go without the *prandium*, come to the refectio at three o'clock, which will then take the character of the *Cæna Domini*, and then attend the oblation, and receive the Communion. 'I think this had better be done' (he writes) 'at such an hour, that he who has also kept the fast may come to the oblation after the refectio at three o'clock. Wherefore we compel none to take the *prandium* before that Lord's Supper, but we dare forbid none to do so.'

This is the main argument of St. Augustine in answer to the three questions of Januarius. These were as follows: First, about celebrations on Maundy Thursday—must there be two? Secondly, about the Lenten fast on that day—is it to be observed? Thirdly, about the Maundy itself—is the Communion to be *after* supper?

St. Augustine says there is no ready answer to these questions, for there is no Scriptural rule on the subject.

¹ The Egyptians, according to Socrates, used to communicate on Saturday evening after a feast. This would seem to be a weekly Maundy.

There is no universal custom either way; there is no question of faith or morals involved: men should, therefore, be content to do what their own Church does, without raising unnecessary difficulties.

The Maundy itself, he points out, depends upon the text 'When they were eating, Jesus took bread;' for the institution of the Sacrament took place at and after a meal. But here rose up the question that the Canon of Hippo directly contravened this Gospel precedent, for it laid down that the celebrants must not have taken the morning meal. Are we, then, to blame the Church for having ignored our Blessed Lord's example in this respect? Clearly not, for there were good reasons why the institution should be the last act of our Lord amongst His chosen ones before His crucifixion. For His going away from the Sacrament to His Passion would the more connect the two in the minds of the Apostles, and would impress the Sacrament of His love the more firmly in their recollections. If, however, our Blessed Lord had intended that it should always be taken after food, we cannot think that anyone would have deviated from this rule; but as this has not always been followed everywhere, there is no Apostolic rule on the subject, and the Church is not to be blamed for the canon, that the Sacrament of the altar is to be celebrated by men who are fasting.

Similarly, there is no Apostolic rule *against* receiving after food, therefore there is no reason to find fault with the Maundy. The Apostle certainly says, when he is speaking of the Sacrament, 'If any man hunger, let him eat at home, that ye come not together to condemnation;' and then he says, 'the rest will I set in order when I come.' We may, therefore, reckon that to be Apostolical which has no variation. But there is the variation of the Maundy, therefore there is no Apostolic precept against it.

Still, the Maundy does not necessarily interfere with

Lent.¹ For St. Augustine shows how *he* combines the two, the Lenten fast and the anniversary *Lord's Supper*. He makes the Lenten refectio at three o'clock the Lord's Supper, and communicates after it, not taking the *prandium*, and so keeping the strictness of Lent. Therefore he says by this Canon of Hippo and Carthage, WE (that is, most probably the bishops present at these councils) compel none to take the prandium before the Maundy, though at the same time we do not interfere with them that do so.

He then goes on to give what seems to him the most likely rationale of the custom of breaking Lent on this Thursday. He thinks it arose from the custom of bathing on that day. The Catechumens who were to be baptized at Easter, and who, in keeping Lent, had not washed for six or seven weeks, wished to bathe some day previously; and, as there was a kind of festal character cast over Maundy Thursday by the commemorative Lord's Supper, they chose this day for their bath. But as the bath was of so relaxing a character that it exhausted them, and necessitated food, they took the *prandium*, and so incurred a breach of Lent. As this was permitted to Catechumens, others bathed and lunched with them, enjoying a like immunity from the necessity of keeping Lent.

This is the argument of this portion of the Epistle, a brief analysis of which is given below.

¹ The Council in Trullo only condemns the breach of Lent, and therefore would not condemn the compromise here suggested by St. Augustine. If the *jejunus* of the canon had not been generally interpreted to mean *non pransus*, and the exception not been understood to allow the breach of Lent, the Trullan Council need not have alluded to it. This shows, as has been proved before, that the fast before Communion here alluded to is the Ecclesiastical fast and not the modern *natural* fast. It meant before the meal in the forenoon, and there is no proof that thereby the slight *jentaculum* was prohibited.

SECTION 3.—*Analysis.*

I. General statement of the question.

1. How the variation arose. Men travelled and loved novelty and peculiarity, instead of studying peace and quietness.
2. The questions of Januarius :—
 - a. Are there to be two celebrations on Maundy Thursday ?
 - b. Is Lent to be observed on that day ?
 - c. Is the Communion to be *after* supper ?
3. There is no ready answer to the questions ; for,
 - a. There is no Scriptural rule.
 - b. There is no universal custom.
 - c. There is no question of faith or morals involved.

II. The main argument :—

1. The Maundy depends upon 'When they were eating, Jesus took bread.'
2. But the Church is not to be blamed for deviating from this Gospel precedent ; because, as it has not been always followed everywhere, we cannot suppose that it was an Apostolic rule that we *must* receive directly after food.
3. Again, the Apostle, speaking of this Sacrament, says, 'If any man hunger, let him eat at home ;' therefore there is no rule *against* receiving after food. The Church is, then, not to be blamed for the Maundy.
4. Yet I (*i.e.* St. Augustine himself) suggest that it is quite possible to observe the Maundy *and* to keep the Lenten fast unbroken at the same time by making the three o'clock refectio the Lord's Supper, and omitting the prandium. Therefore WE (*i.e.* the bishops in council) compel none to take the prandium before the Maundy ; but WE forbid none.
5. The rationale of breaking the Lenten fast,

SECTION 4.—*The first Letter to Januarius.*¹

I. GENERAL STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION.

Sit aliquis peregrinus in eo forte loco, ubi perseverantes in observatione Quadragesimæ, nec quintâ sabbati lavant, relaxantve jejunium: Non (inquit) hodie jejunabo. Queritur causa: quia non fit (inquit) in patriâ meâ. Quid aliud ille, nisi consuetudinem suam consuetudini alterius præponere conatur? Non enim mihi de libro Dei hoc recitaturus est, aut universæ quacumque dilatatur Ecclesiæ plenâ voce certabit, aut ostendet istum contra fidem facere, se autem secundum fidem, moresque hinc optimos aut illum violare, aut se custodire, convincet. Violant sane quietem, et pacem suam de superflua questione rixando. Mallem tamen in rebus hujusmodi, ut et ille in hujus, et hic in illius patriâ ab eo quod cæteri faciunt non abhorreret. Si vero in alienâ patriâ cum peregrinaretur, ubi major et frequentior,² et ferventior est populus Dei vidit verbi

1. Men travelled and loved novelty, instead of studying peace: hence the question.

Suppose a stranger is by chance in that place where men persevere in the observance of Lent, and wash not on Thursday, nor relax the fast; I shall not fast to-day, he says. The reason is asked. Because, he says, it is not done in my country. What else is he doing but attempting to place his own custom before the custom of another? For he is not going to claim this from the Word of God; nor will he contend with the full voice of the Universal Church on his side, wherever it is spread abroad; nor will he show that the other is acting against the faith, but he in accordance with the faith; nor will he prove from this either that the other is breaking or that he himself is keeping good morals. They really are breaking peace and quiet by quarrelling about an unimportant question. I should prefer, however, in matters of this kind, that neither should

¹ Ep. liv. (al. 118), *Opera*, Parisiis, 1688, tom. ii. col. 125.

² Here St. Augustine ascribes the two celebrations on Maundy Thursday to the number of communicants: at the end of the letter he gives a different reason altogether. At the present day in the Greek Church men communicate on Maundy Thursday and not on Easter Day; and if the number of communicants be so large as to be inconvenient, there is a second Communion on

gratiâ bis offerri quintâ sabbati hebdomadæ ultimæ quadragesimæ et mane et ad vesperam, veniensque in patriam suam, ubi in fine diei mos est offerri, male atque illicite fieri contendat quoniam alibi aliter ipse viderit, puerilis¹ est iste sensus, cavendus in nobis, tolerandus in aliis, corrigendus in nostris.

Prima ergo inquisitio tua quam in commonitorio posuisti, ex quo trium istorum generum sit, attende. Quæris enim his verbis :—

Quid per quintam feriam ultimæ hebdomadis Quadragesimæ fieri debeat, an offerendum sit mane, et rursus post cœnam propter illud quod dictum

stand aloof from what the rest were doing in the other's country. If, however, when a man was staying in a foreign country, where the people of God were more in number and more crowded and more zealous, he saw, for example, that on Maundy Thursday the offering was made twice, in the morning and evening, and when he comes to his own country, where it is the custom to make the oblation at the end of the day, if, I say, he contend that it is ill done and unlawfully, since *he* has seen another custom elsewhere—this is a puerile opinion, to be avoided by ourselves, borne with in strangers, corrected in our own people.

2. The questions of Januarius.

Therefore see of which of the three kinds your first question in your list of enquiries is. For your questions run thus :—

a. Are there to be two celebrations on Maundy Thursday?

What should be done on Maundy Thursday? must we offer in the morning and again after Supper, because of that which was said, *In like manner after Supper.*

Easter Eve, which is regarded as a kind of adjourned Communion, and not as a second opportunity for the same persons to communicate a second time.

¹ St. Augustine would seem to be writing against those who wish to introduce the discipline and customs of foreign Churches: his remarks are, unfortunately, applicable to our time and our own Church. Men travel abroad and seek to introduce Roman practices into England.

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country. If, how-
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communicate a second time.
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est, *Similiter postquam cœna-*
tum est?

An jejunandum,¹ et post
cœnam tantummodo offer-
endum?²

An etiam jejunandum
et post oblationem, sicut
facere solemus, cœnandum?

Ad hæc itaque ita re-
spondeo, ut quid horum sit
faciendum, si divinæ Scrip-
turæ præscribit auctoritas,
non sit dubitandum quin
ita facere debeamus, ut
legimus, ut jam non quo-
modo faciendum sed quo-
modo sacramentum intelli-
gendum sit, disputemus.

Similiter etiam si quid
horum tota per orbem fre-
quentat Ecclesia. Nam et
hinc quin ita faciendum sit,
disputare insolentissimæ in-
sanix est. Sed neque hoc

b. Must the
Lenten fast
be kept
and the
oblation
be after
Supper?

c. Must we
fast and
sup after
the obla-
tion?

3. There is
no ready
answer to
these ques-
tions.

a. There
is no
Scriptural
rule.

b. There
is no
universal
custom.

Or must we fast, and offer
only after supper?

Or again, must we fast,
and, as we have been ac-
customed, sup after the
oblation?

To this, then, I would
so make answer that there
would be no question which
of these should be done, if
the authority of divine
Scripture prescribes it, but
that we should do as we
read, so that now we should
not be in question as to
how it should be done, but
how the mystery should be
understood.

Similarly, if the whole
Church throughout the
world constantly does either
of these. For also in this
case it would be a mark of
most insolent madness to

¹ It is quite clear from this that the forenoon celebration on Maundy Thurs-
day was supposed to break the Lenten fast. But how? Was it only because
the Communion had been thought to break the fast? Probably not: because
St. Augustine in summing up his letter says that the rule about the Maundy
does not really compel men to take the *prandium*. Perhaps some men made
the *prandium* the Maundy, though St. Augustine's language implies not, for
he says, 'We compel none to take the *prandium* before the *Dominica Cœna*.'
The point is difficult and adds to the obscurity of this epistle, at all events to
us at the present day. It may be that the contrast in the canon is alluded to,
for there *jejuni* and *pransi* are the exact opposites. If, therefore, a man need
not be *jejunus* on Maundy Thursday, he might be *pransus*.

² The fast then spoken of by Januarius has nothing to do with any fast
before Communion in the modern sense, for he says a man may 'fast and
communicate after supper.' It is the ecclesiastical fast of Lent he speaks of,
and certainly not the *jejunium naturæ*.

neque illud inest in eo,
quod tu quæris.

Restat igitur ut de illo
tertio genere sit, quod per
loca regionesque¹ variatur.
Faciât ergo quisque quod
in eâ Ecclesiâ in quam
venit invenerit. Non enim
quidquam eorum contra
fidem fit, aut contra mores,
hinc vel inde meliores.
His enim caussis, aut prop-
ter fidem, aut propter
mores, velemendari oportet
quod perperam fiebat, vel
institui quod non fiebat.
Ipsa quippe mutatio consue-
tudinis etiam quæ adjuvat
utilitate, novitate perturbat.
Quapropter quæ utilis non
est, perturbatione infruc-
tuosâ consequenter noxia
est.

c. There is
no rule of
faith or
morals
concerned.

doubt that it ought to be so
done. But neither the one
nor the other of these points
is in the question you ask.

It remains, then, that it
be of that third kind which
varies with places and re-
gions. Let each, therefore,
do what he shall have found
in that Church to which he
has come. For none of
these is done against faith
or morals, better in this or
that way. For on these
accounts, that is, either for
faith or morals, either that
should be amended which
used to be constantly done,
or that be started which
used not to be done. Yet the
very change of a custom,
even though it helps by its
advantage, disturbs by its
novelty. Wherefore that
which is not useful is con-
sequently noxious by in-
fructuous disturbance.

II. MAIN ARGUMENT.

Nec ideo putari debet
institutum esse multis locis
ut illo die post refectionem
offeratur quia scriptum est,

1. The
Maundy
depends
upon when
they were
eating.

Nor ought it to be sup-
posed that it has been in-
stituted in many places that
on that day the oblation be

¹ From this it is quite clear that St. Augustine asserts that the keeping
the Maundy (i.e. celebrating and communicating after a feast on that day), was
widely prevalent. There was, therefore, then no compulsory rule of Fasting
Communion. So Van Espen, 'De hac dispensatione solvendi jejunium feria v
hebdomadæ majoris sive in Coenâ Domini necnon accipiendi Eucharistiam
eo die a non jejunis tractat S. Aug. (Ep. liv. Ad Januarium) atque eam esse
de hoc genere quod per loca regionesque variatur,' &c.—Schol. in Can. Trull.
xxix., Opera, Lovanii, 1753, tom. iii. p. 375.

t that it ought to be so.
But neither the one
ne other of these points
the question you ask.

It remains, then, that it
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tually noxious by in-
tuous disturbance.

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Nor ought it to be sup-
posed that it has been in-
tuted in many places that
that day the oblation be

ne asserts that the keeping
after a feast on that day), was
compulsory rule of Fasting
one solvendi jejunium feria v
non accipiendi Eucharistiam
(Januarium) atque eam esse
&c.—Schol. in Can. Trull.

*Identidem et calicem post
cœnam dicens, etc.*¹ Ipsam
enim potuit appellare cœ-
nam quâ jam Corpus accepe-
rant,² ut deinde calicem ac-
ciperent. Apostolus namque
alibi dicit, *Convenientibus
ergo vobis in unum, non est
Dominicam cœnam mandu-
care, hanc ipsam accep-
tionem Eucharistiæ Domi-
nicam cœnam*³ vocans.
Illud magis movere potuit
homines, utrum jam refecti
die illa vel offerrent vel

made after a refection, be-
cause it was written, *Like-
wise the cup after supper,
saying, &c.* For he could
call that the supper in
which they had just re-
ceived the Body, that then
they should receive the cup.
For the Apostle elsewhere
says, *When ye come together,
it is not to eat the Lord's
Supper*, calling this very
receiving of the Eucharist
the Lord's Supper. That
saying could more move

¹ That the second celebration should be referred to this passage of Scripture seems to show that a layman in St. Augustine's day knew more of the words of the Consecration prayer than of the Gospel history itself. This distinctly implies that those words were then said aloud in the Consecration prayer.

² This is a very strange suggestion and might be pressed by Roman Catholics into an assertion of a Communion in one kind; as if St. Paul's calling the reception of the Eucharist the Lord's Supper was sufficient ground for thinking the reception of the Body only might be called 'the Supper.'

³ St. Chrysostom has a perfectly different interpretation. He says that the *agapè* was 'the Lord's Supper.' He says, 'What is it, then, to eat the Lord's Supper? It is not, he says, to eat the Lord's Supper: speaking of that Supper which Christ gave on the last night when His disciples were all with Him. For in that Supper both Lord and slaves all sat down together: but ye, though ye are fellow-slaves, have seditions and schisms among you. He did not even drive away the traitor: for even Judas was with them then; but you scare away your brother. Wherefore, he saith, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, calling that the Lord's Supper which is with perfect charity and concord, which is common to all, all being invited to it together.' (*Hom. in dictum Pauli, 'Oportet et Hæreses,' &c., Opera, Parisiis, tom. iii. p. 245 E.*) In a similar manner he speaks on the passage in St. Paul, *Hom. xxvii. in 1 Cor. Opera, tom. x. p. 244.* Elsewhere, however, St. Chrysostom speaks of the Sacrament as a supper. Speaking of the Sacrament he says, 'Believe that it is now the very Supper at which He was reclining. For there is no difference between them. Nor is it as if man wrought this one, and He that, but Christ works both.' (*Hom. in Mat. 50, tom. vii. p. 517 A.*) St. Augustine and St. Basil, as well as St. Chrysostom, call the Sacrament a Supper, or the Lord's Supper; Tertullian (*De Spectaculis, xiii. Opera, 1675, p. 79*) calls it 'Dei Cœna.' The censure therefore upon the Church of England for so using the name; in Mr. Blunt's *Commentary on the Prayer Book* (p. 163), is shared by some ancient fathers. It is said, 'the transference of a Scriptural term from one thing to another cannot be wholly justified,' &c. See above, p. 102, note.

sumerent Eucharistiam, quod in Evangelio dicitur, *Cum autem illi manducarent accepit Jesus panem et benedixit; cum etiam superius dixisset, Cum sero autem factum esset, recumbebat cum duodecim et manducantibus eis dixit, Quoniam unus ex vobis tradet Me.* Postea enim tradidit Sacramentum.¹ †† Et liquido apparet quando primum acceperunt discipuli Corpus et Sanguinem Domini non eos accepisse jejunos.

Numquid tamen propterea calumniandum est universæ Ecclesiæ² quod

2. But the Church is not to be blamed for

men, as to whether on that day they should offer or receive the Eucharist just after a meal, which is in the Gospel, *But when they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it.* Since also he had said before, *But when it was evening He sat down with the twelve, and while they were eating, He said, One of you shall betray Me.* For after this He gave the Sacrament. And it is certainly clear that when the disciples first received the Body and Blood of the Lord, they received not fasting.

Yet must we on that account at all blame the whole Church, because it is

¹ The passage between double daggers is the passage quoted by Gratian.

² Probably some nineteen years after this letter was written the Bishops of the province of Mauritania Sitiphensis instructed their legates at the Council of Carthage to ask the Council to make a rule about fasting celebration. They were content at hearing that such a rule had been passed at Hippo in A.D. 392, and was again confirmed in their presence. If there had been any such custom known at Sitiphis, we could hardly suppose they would have asked for a rule to be passed. Nor is it more strange that St. Augustine should be ignorant of the absence of such a custom in Sitiphis, than that the Bishops in Mauritania Sitiphensis should be ignorant of what had been passed at Hippo Regius; for Carthage was much farther from Hippo than was Sitiphis. If St. Augustine knew not of the custom in Mauritania Sitiphensis, no wonder he knew not about the custom in Egypt which Socrates speaks of, that the Egyptians celebrated generally after supper. I cannot but think that what is here uppermost in St. Augustine's mind is that the plenary Council of Africa had passed this canon unanimously. Elsewhere we find even local councils claiming to legislate for the universal Church. Thus the Council of Sardica (A.D. 347) says of its own decrees, 'Universa, quæ constituta sunt, Catholica Ecclesia in universo orbe diffusa custodiat.' (Carranza, *Summa*, p. 155.) So with the second Council of Carthage (A.D. 390): 'Gratulemur Domino Nostro prestante quod pro statu Ecclesiæ Catholiçæ cuncta nos salubri consilio servanda decrevimus.' (Bruns, i. p. 122.) Similarly the second Council of Mâcon (A.D. 585): 'Ut ea quæ Spiritu Sancto dictante per ora omnium nostrorum terminata fuerint per

as to whether on that they should offer or the Eucharist just a meal, which is in the el, *But when they eating, Jesus took and blessed it.* Since he had said before, *when it was evening He down with the twelve, while they were eating, said, One of you shall y Me.* For after this gave the Sacrament.

it is certainly clear when the disciples first ved the Body and d of the Lord, they re- d not fasting.

et must we on that unt at all blame the e Church, because it is

ssage quoted by Gratian. was written the Bishops of their legates at the Council fasting celebration. They assed at Hippo in A.D. 392, e had been any such custom ould have asked for a rule Augustine should be ignorant of the Bishops in Mauritania assed at Hippo Regius; for Sitiphis. If St. Augustine is, no wonder he knew nct of, that the Egyptians cele- hat what is here uppermost il of Africa had passed this councils claiming to legis- f Sardica (A.D. 347) says of *atholica Ecclesia in universo* 55.) So with the second ino Nostro prestante quod silio *servanda* decrevimus.¹ Macon (A.D. 585): 'Ut ea rorum terminata fuerint per

a jejunis semper accipitur? *Ex hoc enim placuit Spiritui Sando,*¹ ut in honorem tanti Sacramenti in os Christiani prius Dominicum Corpus intraret quam cætericibi:² nam ideo per universum orbem mos iste servatur. Neque enim quia post cibos dedit Dominus, propterea pransi aut cenati³ fratres ad illum Sacramentum accipiendum convenire debent aut sicut faciebant quos Apostolus⁴

not follow- ing this Gospel precedent always.

always received by fasting men? For for this reason *it seemed good to the Holy Ghost* that, in honour of so great a Sacrament, the Lord's Body should enter the mouth of a Christian before other food: for on that account this custom is observed throughout the whole world. Nor indeed because the Lord gave it after food, therefore ought the brethren to meet to re-

*omnes Ecclesias innotescant.*¹ (Bruns, ii. p. 248.) So also Co. Trull. (A.D. 692), can. lvi.; Co. Tolet. VI. can. vi. It is possible, therefore, that St. Augustine is merely here referring to the keeping the Canon of Hippo and Carthage.

¹ Acts xv. 28. There is no doubt that St. Augustine is here alluding to the decision of the Council of Hippo in its famous canon. This was the first time a rule had been made for fasting celebration, and it was made in a council of Bishops. St. Augustine, therefore, uses for the canon the *very phrase* used in the Book of the Acts for the decision of the first Council of Jerusalem. As Van Espen (Schol. in Can. Trull. xxix.) points out, the whole letter is about this Canon of Hippo, and this phrase must be meant to show that St. Augustine felt, as the Church has felt from the times of the Apostles to the present, that it might be said of a canon of a Council '*placuit Spiritui Sancto.*' See below, p. 308, where the phrase is discussed at length.

² This really need not mean more than before instead of after a meal. There is no allusion whatever to the first food in the day or since midnight: the question was whether men should be *jam refecti*, just refreshed with food, as St. Augustine has just said.

³ It is clear, then, that St. Augustine took no heed of any other meals than these two which were the heavy meals of the day; the *jentaculum* was but a small portion of food to prevent exhaustion, like the German *Weckenbrod*, or the usual cup of coffee.

⁴ St. Chrysostom thinks that the *agapè* of the Corinthians was *after* and not before Communion; and Giustiniani says that St. Augustine must be wrong, because St. Paul would have used much stronger language had the excess been before Communion (1 Cor. xi. 20). Giustiniani argues wholly from the feeling and position of his own time, and probably St. Chrysostom interprets the passage according to the custom known to him amongst his own people. Estius, in his *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles*, points out at length that in all probability the *agapè* of the Corinthians was before the Communion, and he claims a long list of authorities on his side. St. Thomas Aquinas, in his *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles*, has an interpretation which we must hope cannot be the true one: 'In primitivâ Ecclesiâ fideles

arguit et emendat, mensis suis ista miscere. Namque Salvator quo vehementius commendaret mysterii illius altitudinem ultimum hoc voluit altius infigere cordibus et memoriæ discipulorum, a quibus ad passionem digressurus erat. Et ideo non præcepit quo deinceps ordine sumeretur ut Apostolis per quos Ecclesias dispositurus erat servaret hunc locum.

Nam si hoc ille monuisset ut post cibos alios semper acciperetur, credo quod eum morem nemo variasset.††

Cum vero ait Apostolus de hoc sacramento loquens, *Propter quod, fratres, cum convenitis ad manducandum, invicem expectate si quis*

ceive that Sacrament after the prandium or cœna, or as they did whom the Apostle blames and corrects, mingle it with their tables. For the Saviour, that He might the more earnestly commend the depth of that mystery, wished to fix this last upon the hearts and memory of His disciples, from whom He was to turn to His passion. And on this account He did not teach in what order it should hereafter be taken, in order to preserve this position for the Apostles by whom He was about to order the Churches.

For if He had given them this monition, that it should always be received after other food, I believe that none would have changed that custom.

When, however, the Apostle, speaking of this sacrament, says, *Wherefore, brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for*

For if the Lord had ordained that it was to be after food, none would have done otherwise.

3. Again, the Apostle speaking of this sacrament, says, *If*

panem et vinum offerebant, quæ consecrabantur in Sanguinem et Corpus Christi, quibus jam consecratis, divites qui multa obtulerant eadem sibi repetebant, et sic ipsi abundanter sumebant, pauperibus nihil sumentibus, qui nihil obtulerant. . . . [Et] ita sequitur quod [alius] scilicet pauper, qui nihil obtulit; [Esurit] nihil scilicet sumens de consecratis [alius autem] scilicet dives qui multa obtulit [ebrius est] ad literam: propter hoc quod nimium sumpsit de vino consecrato, quod scilicet quasi proprium repoposcit. Then follows a long argument as to whether this were possible, ending: 'Et hâc ratione species illæ panis et vini possunt nutrire et inebriare, sicut si esset ibi substantia panis et vini.'—Opera D. Thomæ Aquinatis, Romæ, 1570, tom. xvi. c. 75. He gives this as one of two possible explanations.

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dium or coena, or
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e, speaking of this
ent, says, *Wherefore,*
n, when ye come to
to eat, tarry one for

Sanguinem et Corpus
alerant eadem sibi repe-
s nihil summentibus, qui
cilicet pauper, qui nihil
cilicet dives
c quod nimium sumpsit
poscit.' Then follows a
ding: 'Et hac ratione
e, sicut si esset ibi sub-
Romæ, 1570, tom. xvi.
ions.

*esurit domi manducet, ut non
ad iudicium conveniatis,
statim subtexit, Cætera
autem cum venero, ordinabo.*
Unde intelligi datur (quia
multum erat ut in epis-
tolâ totum illum agendi
ordinem insinueret quem
universa per orbem servat
ecclesia) ab ipso ordinatum
esse quod nullâ morum
diversitate variatur. Sed
nonnullos¹ probabilis quæ-
dam ratio delectavit ut
uno certo die per annum
quo ipsam Cœnam² Domi-
nus dedit tamquam ad
insigniolem commemora-
tionem post cibos offerri et
accipi liceat Corpus et San-
guinem Domini.

any man
hunger, let
him eat at
home.

The
Church,
therefore,
is not to be
blamed for
the Maun-
dy, since
there is no
universal,
and there-
fore no
Apostolic,
rule to the
contrary.

*another, and if any hunger,
let him eat at home, that ye
come not together for conde-
nation, he at once sub-
joined, But the rest will I
set in order when I come.*
Whence we may understand
(since it was much that he
should suggest in an epistle
the whole order of proced-
ure which is observed by
the whole Church through-
out the world) that that
was set in order by him
which is not varied by any
difference of customs. But
a certain laudable reason has
found favour with some, that
on one certain day in the year
on which the Lord gave
the very supper, as if for a
more striking commemora-
tion, the Body and Blood
of the Lord might be
offered and received after
food.

Honestius³ autem arbi-

4. St. Au-
gustine

But I think this had

¹ The argument of St. Augustine seems here to be, that as there is this variation from the custom of celebrating and communicating before food, therefore there was no Apostolic rule against it. Hence the Church is not to be blamed for the Maundy feast. For he says, 'That is Apostolic which has no variation; here is a variation, therefore there is no Apostolic rule.' This is precisely what he said at the beginning, that there was no universal custom about receiving before food. An Apostolic rule would admit of no exception or variation: this is what St. Augustine lays down four times in this part of the Epistle.

² This is the Last Supper, the Mystical Supper itself, and not the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

³ The most startling translation of this passage is given in Mr. Blunt's *Theological Dictionary* under the word *Fasting*: 'But I think it is better to observe the hour (!) and remain fasting until after the refection, which takes place at three o'clock, before coming to the oblation.' How can a man remain fasting until after he has had a meal?

tror eâ horâ fieri ut qui
etiam jejunaverit post¹
refectionem quæ horâ nonâ
fit ad oblationem² possit
occurrere. Quapropter
neminem³ cogimus ante
Dominicam illam cœnam⁴
prandere, sed nulli etiam
contradicere audemus.

Hoc tamen non arbitror
institutum nisi quia plures
et prope omnes in plurisque
locis eo die lavare consue-
runt. Et quia nonnulli
etiam jejunium custodiunt,
mane offertur propter pran-
dentes, quia jejunia simul
et lavacra tolerare non

suggests a
way of
keeping
Lent as
well as the
Maundy.
Hence the
Hippo-
Canon
does not
compel a
breach of
Lent.

5. A Ra-
tionale of
the breach
of the
Lenten fast
on this
day, and
the double
oblation.

better be done at such an
hour, that he who has also
kept the fast may come
to the oblation after the re-
fection at three o'clock.
Wherefore we *compel* none
to take the prandium before
that Lord's Supper, but we
dare forbid none.

Yet I think that this
was not originated, except
that many, and almost all
in most places, were accus-
tomed to bathe on that
day. And because some
also kept the fast, there was
a morning offering for those
who took the prandium,

¹ Here some MSS. read *ante*, and, strangely enough, the translation issued by Messrs. Clark of Edinburgh accepts the reading, which helps to mystify St. Augustine's meaning. It shows either that the scribe thought St. Augustine was very obscure and wished to improve his meaning, or that there was an attempt to tamper with St. Augustine's words to make them agree with the opinion prevalent at the time.

² It would seem that St. Epiphanius alludes to this custom of the Maundy before celebration at three o'clock. For he speaks of the celebration in some places being at this hour on this day, and he says that thereby there was a breach of the fast. See above, p. 262.

³ From the sudden change of number we may learn that St. Augustine is alluding to the Bishops in Council at Hippo, where St. Augustine was present as priest in A.D. 393; and at Carthage, where he was present in all probability as Bishop in A.D. 397. Before this he gives his own opinion, *Honestius arbitror*. 'This is *my way* of reconciling the Maundy with Lent. I celebrate after the three o'clock refection, I thus keep Lent and keep the Cœna Domini as well. So that there is no need for saying, that by this canon we, the Bishops in Council, *compel* men to take the prandium which would break Lent, still we, the Bishops, do not dare to forbid anyone doing so.' For we must always remember, as Van Espen points out, that in this letter St. Augustine is clearly dealing with this Canon of Hippo and Carthage. Directly after he has said *cogimus* and *audemus* he returns to the singular *arbitror, mihi cogitanti*, which shows clearly what was in his mind.

⁴ *Dominicam illam cœnam*. This is the feast before celebration and Communion on Maundy Thursday in commemoration of the Mystical Supper at which the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament took place. See above, p. 100, seq.

be done at such an
that he who has also
the fast may come
oblation after the re-
n at three o'clock.
efore we *compel* none
the prandium before
Lord's Supper, but we
forbid none.

et I think that this
not originated, except
many, and almost all
ost places, were accus-
d to bathe on that
And because some
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make them agree with the

this custom of the Maundy
of the celebration in some
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s own opinion, Honestius
dy with Lent. I celebrate
nd keep the Coena Domini
at by this canon we, the
adium which would break
anyone doing so.' For we
at in this letter St. Augus-
l Carthage. Directly after
the singular *arbitror, mihi*

efore celebration and Com-
of the Mystical Supper at
took place. See above,

possunt,¹ ad vesperam vero
propter jejunantes. Si
autem queris cur etiam
lavandi mos ortus sit: nihil
mihi de hâc re cogitanti
probabilius occurrit nisi
quia baptizandorum cor-
pora per observationem
Quadragesimæ sordidata
cum offensione sensus
ad fontem tractarentur,
nisi aliquâ die lavarentur.
Istum autem diem potius
ad hoc electum quo Coena
Dominica² anniversarie
celebratur. Et quia con-
cessum est hoc baptismum
accepturis, multi cum his
lavare voluerunt jejunium-
que relaxare. His ut potui
disputatis, moneo, ut ea

because they could not
bear fasting and the bath
at the same time; and at
evening for the sake of
those who kept the fast.
But if you also ask why the
custom of bathing was
started, nothing occurs to
me more probable, as I
think of it, except that the
bodies of those who were
to be baptized, befouled by
the keeping of Lent, would
be handled at the font with
sensible offensiveness, un-
less they bathed on some
day. But for this that day
was rather chosen when
the anniversary of the
Lord's Supper is celebrated,
and because this concession

¹ This is very difficult to understand. First of all it is a perfectly different reason for two celebrations on Maundy Thursday from what had been given before. Next, if St. Augustine was condemning the Maundy, we might understand that the morning celebration was *before the prandium*. But he has just said that the Bishops neither compel nor forbid the prandium in the forenoon before the Maundy or Anniversary Lord's Supper: therefore, as he recognizes the possibility of men taking two meals before Communion on Maundy Thursday, he certainly is not at all speaking against the Maundy. Indeed, he has just explained his own custom in favour of the Maundy. Or again, if he had said that men had better only take one meal before Communion, whether it was the *prandium* in the forenoon or the *refectio* at three o'clock, this part of his argument would be intelligible, for then the morning *prandium* might be made the 'Dominica Coena' or feast before Communion. But he only says, 'mane propter prandentes.' The *jejunantes*, of course, is of the Lenten fast. The only thing clear about this passage is that the bath was always in the morning just before the prandium, and was of so exhausting a character that a meal was required soon after it.

² This shows that in St. Augustine's opinion the anniversary Maundy was of great antiquity. For he says that this feast gave a certain festal character to the day, which made men choose it out as a day to bathe on and break the strictness of the Lenten fast. It was commonly spoken of as a feast. Cf. St. Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, lib. viii. cap. xliii. Parisiis, 1561, p. 481: 'Dum ad Dominicæ Coenæ festa ad Ecclesiam suam populo expectante rediret.'

quæ prælocutus sum serves
quantum potes ut decet
Ecclesiæ prudentem et
pacificum filium.¹

was made to those who were going to receive baptism, many wished to bathe with them, and to break the fast. Having discussed this as well as I could, I admonish you, keep what I have spoken of above as becomes a prudent and peaceful son of the Church.

SECTION 5.—*Placuit Spiritui Sando.*

There is no reasonable doubt that St. Augustine is here using language which in his day would have been understood as referring to a council of bishops. The word 'placuit' itself is peculiarly suggestive of a council. The form of canon usual to the later African councils commenced with the word 'placuit,' or with the dependent conjunction 'ut,' which implied the 'placuit' of a preceding canon. This is especially observable of the canons of councils with which St. Augustine had to do. The Council of Hippo, the first with which he was at all implicated, set the example of this precise form of canon. Previously the determinations of the African councils had read more like the minutes or acts of a meeting than the carefully worded canons of a council: but, at the Council of Hippo, there was a great change, and thenceforward generally the canons of African councils began with a 'placuit.'

Again, there is a very complete catena of evidence from the Council of the Apostles, recorded by St. Luke in the Acts, to the Council of Trent in modern times, that the determinations of a council are ascribed to the operation of

¹ Hence it is clear that Januarius was a layman; and St. Augustine, in explaining all this to him, is striving so to speak as to make him see that his questions are about indifferent matters, and he had better peaceably and quietly follow the custom of his Church. This desire for a peaceable compromise probably makes much of the letter obscure. The general rule is clear enough, but the particular application is rather laboured and perplexed.

made to those who going to receive baptism, many wished to bathe them, and to break fast. Having discussed as well as I could, I wish you, keep what I have spoken of above as a prudent and careful son of the Church.

in Sancto.

St. Augustine is here would have been under-bishops. The word of a council. The African councils combined with the dependent 'placuit' of a preceding council of the canons of the Council was at all implicated, of canon. Previously councils had read more than the carefully the Council of Hippo, forward generally the in a 'placuit.' The catena of evidence recorded by St. Luke in modern times, that the led to the operation of

man; and St. Augustine, in as to make him see that his had better peaceably and desire for a peaceable conclusion. The general rule is her laboured and perplexed.

the Holy Spirit. But there is no evidence that a general custom was ever ascribed to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, except as being Apostolical, and therefore ordered by men who were inspired. The observance of Sunday, Infant Baptism, and the like are said to have been Apostolic traditions, but there is no use of any phrase like *Placuit Spiritui Sancto* about them.

In order, then, to investigate the meaning of this phrase in St. Augustine's letter, we must search into the origin and use of the expression. First and foremost of all, the first Apostolic council of Jerusalem must occupy our attention. This is clearly the prototype of all councils, since it was ordered by the Apostles themselves. It is quite true that, if we turn to the Vulgate, we do not find the exact phrase '*Placuit Spiritui Sancto*,' but *visum est*. But we must remember that the revision known to us as the Vulgate had not yet been made, or at least was not known to St. Augustine in Africa when this letter was written to Januarius. Three years after the date of this letter (that is, in A.D. 403), we find St. Augustine writing to St. Jerome about his revision¹ of the Gospels; and, as St. Jerome's labours commenced with the Gospels, it may well be that he had not completed his work on the Acts, or, at all events, that it was unknown in Africa when St. Augustine wrote to Januarius in A.D. 400. We need not, therefore, think that because the Vulgate has '*Visum est enim Spiritui Sancto*,' that St. Augustine is not quoting the passage in the Acts because he writes *placuit*. For, if we look a little deeper, there will be found reason for asserting without hesitation that St. Augustine was quoting the very words of the passage in the Book of the Acts from a version well known to him.

We have preserved to us versions earlier than the

¹ 'Non parvas Deo gratias agimus de opere tuo, quo Evangelium ex Græco interpretatus es.'—Ep. lxxi. (al. 10), § 6, *Opera*, Parisiis, 1689, tom. ii. col. 161.

revision of St. Jerome, which is known as the Vulgate, some of which have been printed by Sabatier; and by reference to his book we can find positive evidence that in all probability St. Augustine was citing St. Luke in the precise phrase of the version commonly known to him. In the Old Version printed by Sabatier¹ the passages which describe the decision of the Apostles run as follows:—

- Acts xv. 22. Tunc placuit Apostolis.
 " 25. Placuit nobis collectis in unum.
 " 28. PLACUIT ENIM SPIRITUI SANCTO et nobis.

These last are the exact words used by St. Augustine, and that he was in all probability citing from this version intentionally is seen from two considerations: first, that in another passage of the same letter he makes a quotation which agrees with this older version, where it differs from the Vulgate;² and, secondly, that two other African bishops³ (one a great follower and imitator of St. Augustine) avowedly quote the passage in the form which agrees with this older version, and with St. Augustine, 'placuit Spiritui Sancto.'

It would, therefore, have been somewhat misleading if St. Augustine had used a passage of Scripture in a sense

¹ *Bibliorum Sacrorum Latinae Versiones Antiquae, &c., Opera Petri Sabatier*, Remis, 1743, tom. iii. p. 553.

² For example, he writes, 'Cætera autem cum venero ordinabo,' where the Vulgate has *disponam*; he also has '*ad iudicium*,' where the Vulgate reads *in*.

³ St. Vigilius, Bishop of Thapsus (in A.D. 480), *De Trinitate contra Varinadum*, lib. ii. cap. ix., and again lib. iii. cap. xc., in both places has '*Placuit Spiritui Sancto et nobis*.' So also St. Fulgentius, Bishop of Ruspe (A.D. 510), *Pro Fide Catholica*, § 9. The Venerable Bede comments upon the passage, '*Placuit Spiritui Sancto, qui arbiter suæ potestatis existens ubi vult spirat*;' and in his valuable *Retractationes* he has, '*In Greco scriptum est, Placuit enim Spiritui Sancto et nobis*.' (*Opera*, ed. Giles, 1844, vol. xii. pp. 66 and 143.) In the Latin translation of St. Irenæus, as it has come down to us, we find the same word '*placuit*.' (*Contra Hæreses*, lib. iii. cap. xii. § 14.) Tertullian and St. Cyprian have *visum est*. That the form '*placuit Spiritui Sancto*' is the most natural is seen from its being chosen by Valesius to render the Greek of the passage in the Acts where it is cited by Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* lib. v. cap. xxii. Moguntiae, 1677, p. 289.

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Irenæus, as it has come down
Hæreses, lib. iii. cap. xii. § 14.)
that the form 'placuit Spiritui
chosen by Valesius to render
cited by Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.*

different from that in common acceptance without an immediate explanation. Elsewhere, in this same epistle, he draws attention to the fact, that when St. Paul speaks of 'the Lord's Supper,' he is probably referring to the Sacrament of the Eucharist. This explanation was necessary or advisable, because the name 'Lord's Supper' was then commonly understood of the anniversary Maundy, commemorative of the Last Supper, at which the Eucharist was instituted. If, therefore, St. Augustine had been using the Scriptural phrase 'placuit enim Spiritui Sancto,' in a sense differing from its Scriptural meaning, it is inconceivable that he would not have said so.

The comment of à Lapide on the passage in the Acts is as follows :—

Hence it is clear that the Holy Spirit is present at, and presides over, a council, and so directs it that it does not err in its decrees. Whence fathers in Council are wont to say, 'This is the determination of the Holy Synod lawfully assembled in the Holy Spirit.'

The great commentator is here quoting the language of the Councils¹ of Constance, Bâle, and Trent, all of which use some such phrase as he here gives.

Bellarmino, too, writes in the same strain :—

The first council confidently says, 'Visum est Spiritui Sancto et nobis.' But if that council, from which all other councils took their model, asserts that its decrees were the decrees of the Holy Spirit, certainly the other lawful councils can assert the same, which prescribe rules of faith and practice to the universal Church. For the Holy Spirit was present at that council, since it was necessary for the preservation of the Church : but it was no less necessary (and will so continue) to other times, since new heresies constantly arise.

From earliest times the Fathers of the Church have ascribed the same divine influence to other assemblies of

¹ See Carranza, *Summa Omnium Conciliorum*, Parisiis, 1668, pp. 625, 635, 641, 647, 679, &c. The Council of Trent uses the phrase at every session.

bishops, besides the first Apostolic council at Jerusalem. St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Archbishop of Neo-Cæsarea (A.D. 250), ascribes this influence to a council of bishops not yet held,¹ not doubting that the Holy Spirit would be present at a solemn synod of bishops. In an answer (reckoned in the East as canonical) about the discipline which should be administered to certain apostate and regenade Christians, who had even assisted in the martyrdom of some of their own brethren, the archbishop writes :—

They must be shut out from being even *audientes*, until there be some determination about them from the holy bishops in council, and before them from the Holy Spirit.

These words are manifestly an allusion to the Apostolic council at Jerusalem, since the same words are used: and St. Gregory is clearly of opinion that even a local council of bishops may claim to be guided in their decisions by the Holy Spirit, so that of their decrees it may be said, 'placuit Spiritui Sancto et nobis.' Upon this answer of St. Gregory there are glosses of Zonaras and Balsamon, but, as they scarcely differ even in words, only one is here given :²—

But he adds, 'and before them from the Holy Spirit,' showing that whatever is decided upon by bishops in common discussion, the Holy Spirit suggests it to them.

Language similar to that of St. Gregory in the East was at the same time being used in the West, in a letter written from Carthage to the Bishop of Rome. St. Cyprian in A.D. 252, writing to Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, a synodal letter, about the determination of a council of forty-two bishops assembled at Carthage to decide questions about those who had lapsed to persecution, has this expression,³ 'placuit nobis, Sancto Spiritu suggerente: it seemed good

¹ *Kanon Z.* *Σύνοδος κανόνων*, Athens, 1854, tom. iv. p. 60.

² It is the Commentary of Balsamon. *Σύνοδος*, tom. iv. p. 61.

³ Ep. liv. *Opera*, Parisiis, 1726, p. 79.

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to us, at the suggestion of the Holy Spirit,' where we have the phrase used of a council of Carthage by a metropolitan of Africa.

When the great Council of Nicæa was held (A.D. 325), we can scarcely be surprised to find the Fathers speaking of its determinations in similar language.¹ St. Basil,² in the same century, says of it, that 'the three hundred bishops, meeting together without contentiousness, did not give utterance to their determinations without the Holy Spirit.' In similar language the Council of Ephesus,³ in the next century (A.D. 431), decreed 'that it should not be lawful for anyone to set forth, write, or compose any other faith at variance with that defined by the holy Fathers assembled at Nicæa, with the Holy Ghost.'

Soon afterwards, in A.D. 445, St. Leo⁴ in a letter says, 'According to the canons of the holy Fathers originated by the Spirit of God;' and again, in the year following, he writes⁵ that 'a council of bishops may determine such things as pertain to ecclesiastical discipline, the Holy Spirit revealing this to them.'

From these passages it will be seen that, before and about the time of St. Augustine, the utterances of a council were ascribed to the Holy Spirit. St. Gregory and St. Basil evidence this in the East; the African Metropolitan, St. Cyprian, and the Roman Patriarch, St. Leo, in the West, bear their testimony, which is borne out by the Council of Ephesus. There is every reason, then, for thinking that when a father ascribes to the work of the

¹ The *Chronicon Paschale* speaks of the Fathers of Nicæa 'who had assembled thither, with the Holy Ghost.'—Ed. L. Dindorfius, Bonnæ, 1832, p. 17.

² Ep. cxiv. (al. 204), Cyriaco, Tarsi commoranti, *Opera*, Gaume, tom. iii. p. 297.

³ *Σύνταγμα κανόνων*, Athens, 1852, tom. ii. p. 200.

⁴ Ep. xii. (al. 84), cap. ii. Paris, 1675 (ed. Quesnel), tom. i. p. 440.

⁵ Ep. xiii. Paris, 1675, tom. i. p. 445. Similarly St. Isidore of Seville, (A.D. 600), 'Concilia quæ sancti patres Spiritu Dei pleni sanxerunt.'—*Origines*, lib. vi. cap. xv.; *Opera*, 1617, p. 48 G.

Holy Spirit a rule not to be found in the inspired word of Scripture, he is quoting the decree of a council. For Carranza is only giving the common view of all the ancients when he says, 'the Holy Spirit is the founder of the Synod, and the Author of those rules which are laid down in Synod.'

If we leave the Fathers and turn to the councils, they are not found backward to claim this grace.² It were tedious

¹ Carranza, *Summa Omnium Conciliorum*, Parisiis, 1668, p. 1.

² The following extracts from the canons of twenty Councils will be sufficient to maintain this position. For the first seven centuries reference is commonly made to Bruns, *Canones*, Berolini, 1839; for others, to Carranza, *Summa Omnium Conciliorum*, Parisiis, 1668. 1. Carthage (A.D. 252): 'It seemed good to us, at the suggestion of the Holy Spirit.' (St. Cyprian Ep. liv. Parisiis, 1726, p. 79.) 2. Co. Arles (A.D. 314): 'We decided, in the presence of the Holy Ghost and His angels.' (Synodical Epistle, *Concilia*, tom. i. 1449.) 3. Co. Ephesus (A.D. 431): 'The holy Fathers met together at Nicea, with the Holy Ghost.' (*Συνταγμα κανόνων*, Athens, 1852, tom. ii. p. 200.) 4. Co. Rome under Hilarius (A.D. 465): 'The pious assembly, the Holy Spirit gathering them together, exhorts.' (Bruns, ii. p. 282.) 5. Co. Lyons I. (A.D. 517), can. vi.: 'These things which have been deliberated or determined on by us under divine inspiration.' (Bruns, ii. p. 173.) 6. Co. Epaon (A.D. 517): 'We assembled by the favour of God.' 'These things which with common consent have seemed good to us under inspiration from on high.' (Bruns, ii. pp. 166, 172.) 7. Co. Auvergne I. (A.D. 535): 'When in the name of the Lord, the Holy Spirit gathering them, with the consent of our most glorious lord and most pious King, Theodebert, the holy synod has met at Auvergne.' (Bruns, ii. p. 187.) 8. Co. Orleans III. (A.D. 538), can. xxxiii.: 'These things which have seemed with common consent good to us under the inspiration of God.' (Bruns, ii. p. 201.) 9. Co. Orleans IV. (A.D. 541): 'When the meeting of Bishops had begun to deliberate, with God in their midst.' 'It seemed good, with the favour of God.' (Bruns, ii. p. 201.) 10. Co. Orleans V. (A.D. 549): 'Those things which have been at the present time defined under divine inspiration.' (Bruns, ii. p. 215.) 11. Co. Mâcon I. (A.D. 581), can. xvi.: 'Therefore in the present Council, with the authority of God, we prohibit.' (Bruns, ii. p. 245.) 12. Co. Mâcon II. (A.D. 585): 'Those things which have been determined, the Holy Spirit dictating them by the mouths of all of us.' 'Whosoever have willingly transgressed these things which have been concluded by the dictation of the Holy Spirit.' (Bruns, ii. pp. 248, 254.) 13. Co. Toledo III. (A.D. 589): 'Let nothing be done which the holy Fathers, full of the Spirit of God, prohibited to be done.' (Bruns, i. p. 213.) 14. Co. Chalons-sur-Saône (A.D. 650): 'That it might be made known to us, by the intervention of the inspiration of God, about the canons.' (Bruns, ii. p. 265.) 15. Co. Toledo VIII. (A.D. 653): 'Inspire us, Holy Spirit, and lead us into the port of Thy will. . . . Inspire us, Holy Spirit, and grant us to know what Thou commandest.' 'Where the Holy

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to recite them all, but from the council under St. Cyprian, in the middle of the third century, from the Council of Arles, in the beginning of the fourth century, to the Council of Trent, in the sixteenth century, there has ever been claimed the authority of the Holy Spirit for the decrees of a council. Amongst ourselves the claim is made for the meeting of bishops, who translated and ordered the first Prayer Book of Edward the Sixth: 'and the prayer at meetings of our southern Convocation is for the same grace.'³ Cardinal Bona is only expressing the common belief of the Church at large when he writes, 'the Council lawfully assembled in the Holy Spirit is holy, and the Spirit of God spoke in them and by them.'⁴ This is practically the same as the assertions of Constantine,⁵ St. Gregory the Great,⁶ and others,⁶ that the determinations

Spirit has united an universal assembly. We, therefore, kindled by this Holy Spirit, decree.' (Bruns, i. pp. 272, 284.) 16. Co. Braga III. (A.D. 675): 'We have met together, collected becomingly by the Divine Spirit.' (Bruns, ii. p. 96.) 17. Co. Nicæa II. (A.D. 787): 'We do not reject local synods, but rather love, embrace, and receive them, and observe with utmost respect their divinely inspired canons.' (Carranza, p. 530, misprinted 532.) 18. Co. Constance (A.D. 1414): 'The Synod, lawfully assembled in the Holy Spirit.' Sess. 4: 'The holy general Synod of Constance, lawfully assembled in the Holy Spirit.' Sess. 40. (Carranza, pp. 625, 635.) 19. Co. Bâle (A.D. 1442), Sess. 2: 'The Synod lawfully assembled in the Holy Spirit;' and again, Sess. 33. (Carranza, pp. 641, 647.) 20. Co. Trent (A.D. 1546) commences nearly every session with, 'The sacred (Ecumenical and general Council of Trent, lawfully assembled in the Holy Spirit.' (Carranza, pp. 679, 682, &c.) These are but a sample; many more could be adduced.

¹ The King's Majesty 'hath appointed the Archbishop of Canterbury and certain of the most learned and discreet Bishops . . . to draw and make one convenient and meet order, rite, and fashion . . . the which at this time, by the aid of the Holy Ghost, with one uniform agreement is of them concluded,' &c. 2, 3 Edward VI. cap. i. The Act of Uniformity, 1549.

² 'Concede ut Spiritus Tuus, Qui concilio olim Apostolico, huic nostro etiam insideat.'

³ 'Coetus ipse in Spiritu Sancto congregatus legitime Sanctus et Spiritus Dei in ipsis et per ipsos est locutus.'—*Opera*, ed. Sala, tom. iv. p. 316.

⁴ Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* lib. i. cap. ix.

⁵ 'Sicut Sancti Evangelii quatuor libros sic quatuor concilia suscipere et venerari me fateor.'—St. Gregory, Ep. xxv. (al. 24), *Opera*, Parisiis, 1705, tom. ii. col. 515 B.

⁶ Such as St. Isidore of Seville: 'Concilia quatuor esse scimus venerabiles

of the great councils are to be received as the inspired Gospels are received.

If, then, we find the ascription of a rule to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which is not found in the pages of Holy Scripture, it is most probably to be regarded as a reference to some determination of a council.

But when St. Augustine introduces such a rule by a 'placuit'—the form usual in councils, the form known to have been used of the Apostolic council at Jerusalem, the form in especial used at the Councils of Hippo and Carthage, in which St. Augustine had so great an interest—it does seem hard—nay, impossible—to believe that by the phrase 'placuit enim Spiritui Sancto,' he is not referring to the canons in which he had so great a share, and about which he had been so anxious.

Some, however, have thought that St. Augustine is accounting for the universality of the custom in his day by ascribing it to the influence of the Holy Spirit throughout the Church.¹ If so, the passage is unique, and it is not like St. Augustine's manner to use a Scriptural phrase in a perfectly unique manner without some immediate explanation. Nor, indeed, could the custom have been so universal and binding as such a phrase would certainly imply, as is seen by the action of the bishops legate of Mauritania Sitiphensis, the province of Africa, which immediately joined St. Augustine's province of Numidia on the west. For at some Council of Carthage about this time, and most probably in the year 419,² the bishops legate of Mauritania Sitiphensis were instructed by their fellow bishops, whose representatives they were, to ask

Synodos quæ totam principaliter fidem complectuntur, quasi quatuor Evangelia, vel totidem Paradisi flumina.—*Opera*, 1617, p. 48; *Origines*, lib. vi. cap. xv.

¹ One with whom I could wish always to agree, in a newspaper correspondence in which he wrote at first anonymously, represents the argument thus: 'It must be divine, Augustine argues (rightly or wrongly is not the question), for it is co-extensive with the Church.'—*Church Review*, July 26, 1873.

² See the Chapter on the Supposed Canon of Nicea, above, p. 97.

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that celebrations of the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist might be restricted to times before the prandium. Now, can it be supposed that they would have come forward with this proposition, and asked that it should be entertained and passed at Carthage, if it were a habit so strictly observed amongst them as to be ascribed to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit? It is impossible to think this. They would not have come forward to ask that the Council should decide that infants might be baptized, or that Sunday might be regarded as a holy day, or that Lent might be acknowledged as a time for fasting, or that Wednesday and Friday might be fasted, for these were habits and customs acknowledged and kept. But they do come forward with a list of subjects for the consideration of the Council, and one of these is 'about the prohibition of the sacrifices after the *prandium*.' Then, how is their proposition met? Does St. Augustine, who, in all probability, was present,¹ say 'this is a custom universal throughout the world, and is therefore the decree of the Holy Spirit, and we cannot discuss it?' No; this is not the answer given. Does Aurelius, the president of the Council, stop discussion on a similar ground? No; Aurelius opens the session by saying that he had read a letter from Mizonius, the chief Bishop of the province of Byzacena, which had the Breviarium of the Canons of Hippo attached to it; the legates of Mauritania Sitiphensis had read their paper of instructions; he had also received letters from Crescencianus, chief Bishop (as he professed to be) of Numidia, and from Aurelius: he, therefore, proposes that the council should commence with reading the Epistle of Mizonius with the Breviarium of Hippo. This contained the acceptance of the Nicene Creed, and the prohibition of the oblation after the prandium. The Breviarium, at the

¹ If he was present he was not present as a legate of his province, Numidia. There is no doubt that he was present at some of the Sessions of the Council in A.D. 419.

suggestion of Bishop Epigonius, was read and confirmed. Then the bishops legate of Mauritania rise and say, that two of their instructions had been met by passing this Breviarium of Hippo. The Creed of Nicæa had been read, and the oblation had been prohibited after prandium: they will therefore go on at once to their other propositions. Here, then, these bishops were content to find that this rule had been made at Hippo, and was again confirmed. The Canon at Hippo was dependent upon a 'placuit ut,' and no one (so far as it is recorded), whether at any council of Carthage, or at the original Council of Hippo, protested against the placing a previous rule of the Holy Spirit under their own 'placuit.' If, then, the bishops of Mauritania had been at all aware of any prevailing custom of ante-prandial celebrations amongst themselves, we cannot think that they would have been directed to ask for a new rule: nor can we think they would have been content with the reading and confirming the Canon of Hippo, if there were known to them a previous 'placuit Spiritui Sancto.'

It may be said here that it is strange that the bishops of Mauritania Sitiphensis were ignorant of these Canons of Hippo. Be this as it may, Mizonius (chief bishop of the province of Byzacena) in his letter writes, that it is commonly said that men have not kept the Canons of Hippo because they were ignorant of them; and this excuse may well have been accepted from the bishops of Mauritania, who were far from Carthage, and who were on the borders of 'the barbarians.'¹ Moreover, it is quite clear, from the transactions at the various councils of Carthage, that the Numidian bishops were not on good terms with those of Mauritania for some reason or other,² and there

¹ Thus the metropolitan Aurelius says: 'De provinciâ Mauritanîâ, propterea quod in finibus Africæ posita sit, nihil statuimus, siquidem vicinæ sunt barbarico.'—*Codex Africana Ecclesia*, can. lli., Bruns, i. p. 167.

² This may have had to do with their being removed from the ecclesiastical province of Numidia. At their own request they had a 'prima sedes' amongst themselves, and were no longer subject to the 'primus' of Numidia. (*Codex*

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may not have been much interchange of communication between them.

It is quite clear, then, from this incident that the African bishops at their various councils knew of no earlier 'placuit' for fasting celebration than that of Hippo; and also, it is clear that the French bishops¹ in the sixth century knew of no earlier 'placuit' than that of African councils, otherwise they would not have quoted the Hipponense Canon as the prototype of fasting celebration.

If, then, St. Augustine is by his 'placuit Spiritui Sancto' speaking of a universal custom, it is a custom as unknown to the Mauritians in the West as it was to the Egyptians in the East.

Nor, indeed, is there to be found any example of such a phrase as 'placuit Spiritui Sancto' being used of a custom² of the Church, however universal it was. In modern times³ some such phrase is to be found, but not in ancient times.

But it has been said that St. Augustine explains what he means by saying 'per universum orbem mos iste servatur.'

This phrase is not unknown in St. Augustine's writings for the decision of a Catholic council, even though it were a local one; having, therefore, established the meaning of

Ecc. Afr. can. xvii.) The canon itself as generally given is faulty; but see the remarks of Justell, *Bibliotheca Juris*, 1661, tom. i. p. 422. The Mauritanian legates also complain that two Numidian bishops have presumed to consecrate a bishop, and therefore ask that this may be stopped.—*Codex Ecc. Afr. can. xlix.*

¹ Co. Mâcon II. can. vi., Bruns, ii. p. 251.

² We must remember the difference between traditions of *faith* and *practice*. Before the Council of Nicæa the tradition of true *faith* was specially kept alive by the operation of the Holy Spirit, as St. Irenæus writes of the barbarians who have no written Gospel, 'having Salvation written in their hearts by the Spirit without paper and ink.'—Lib. iii. cap. iv. § 3.

³ The Council of Trent thus speaks of traditions: 'Quæ ab Apostolis acceptæ, aut ab ipsis Apostolis Spiritu Sancto dictante quasi per manus traditæ ad nos usque pervenerunt.'—Carranza, p. 679.

'placuit Spiritui Sancto,' the latter expression may easily be understood to refer to the canon of a council. Nor will this use of words seem strained when we remember the position of St. Augustine. A very great proportion, if not more than half, of the Christians of Africa were Donatists: every town and every village had its Donatist bishop as well as the Catholic bishop. But St. Augustine was confirmed and strengthened in his position by the consoling persuasion, that he was at one with the whole Catholic Church throughout the world, whereas the Donatists were confined to Africa. This feeling, therefore, made him magnify his position and his office as bishop of the Catholic Church throughout the world. We find, then, that sometimes he speaks of the 'totus orbis' having given some judgment; and this is referred to a local council. Thus speaking of the Donatists, he says,¹ 'They condemned some few in Africa by whom, in the judgment of the whole world, they have been overcome.' It is natural to ask where and how were the Donatists condemned by the whole world? and the Benedictine editors shall give the answer. 'This judgment of the whole world,' say they, 'in which the Donatists were overcome by their opponents, is none other than that of Arles.' The Council of Arles, then, is spoken of in this comprehensive manner by St. Augustine. Farther on, in the same treatise,² he uses the same expression when speaking of the same council; and this is his manner not unfrequently. It is quite true that the Council of Arles had been referred to before, though here he does not mention it by name, but he speaks of it as carrying the 'judgment of the whole world' with it. If this had been said of the Council of Nicæa, there would have been no reason to have remarked

¹ 'Quosdam paucos in Africâ damnaverunt, a quibus totius orbis iudicio superati sunt.'—*Contra Epistolam Parmeniani*, lib. iii. cap. iv.; *Opera*, Parisiis, 1694, tom. ix. col. 70 B.

² *Ibid.* cap. vi. tom. ix. col. 78 A.

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upon it; but whatever was previously intended, the Council of Arles was never regarded as more than a local or provincial synod. There is no reason, then, for doubting the possibility of St. Augustine speaking of a rule laid down by a local or provincial synod as a custom held by the whole world, so long as that provincial council was in harmony and in communion with the Catholic Church spread throughout the world.¹ Indeed, we find local synods themselves speaking as if their determinations were to be accepted by the whole Catholic Church. The so-called Second Council of Carthage speaks somewhat in this way:² 'Let us congratulate ourselves, our Lord granting us this, that, for the welfare of the Catholic Church, we have decreed with wholesome counsel all things to be observed.' But the Council of Sardica³ speaks in a more peremptory manner: 'Let the Catholic Church, diffused throughout the whole world, keep all that has been agreed upon.' The Quinisext Council⁴ uses similar words; but this has greater pretensions to be held as a general council, while no one would claim for the Council of Carthage or Sardica any higher rank than that of a local synod.

On all grounds, then, it is most probable that St. Augustine intended to refer to the Canon of Hippo and Carthage when he wrote 'placuit Spiritui Sancto.' For he

¹ If it be objected that St. Augustine does not mention the council either of Hippo or Carthage by name, it must be said that this was clearly his manner. A council was, in his mind, a last resource, to be kept in the background as a reserve force to be employed when all else had failed (compare Ep. xxii. al. 64). Though he earnestly asked for this council of Hippo, and there were canons there passed against feasting in church, yet in his letter to his friend Bishop Alypius (Ep. xxix. Parisiis, 1688, tom. ii. col. 48), where he gives an account of his earnest attempt to stop such disorders, there is not one word to lead anyone to suppose that there had been a council held two years before at Hippo to condemn the disorders he was preaching against.

² Co. Carthag. II. can. xiii. Bruns, i. p. 122.

³ Carranza, p. 155. Bruns (i. p. 105) gives *custodiat* where Carranza reads *custodiat*, but the general meaning is much the same.

⁴ 'This, therefore, also seemed good to us, that the whole Church of God throughout the whole world following in one order should keep the fast' of Lent.—Co. Quinisext. can. lvi. Bruns, i. p. 54.

uses the identical phrase as it stood in the old Latin version of the Book of the Acts, where St. Luke is recording the acts of the Council of Jerusalem; words which are elsewhere used by two bishops of Africa, who are avowedly quoting from the Book of the Acts; he uses the phrase 'placuit,' ever used of the determination of a council after deliberation, and especially noteworthy of the Council of Hippo; and he attributes the rule to the operation of the Holy Spirit, acknowledged to be effectual when bishops are gathered together in God's name in council, but not generally attributed to a consentient custom of isolated bishops. Nor does the reference of this rule to the universal Church militate against this. For St. Augustine himself speaks of a local council as carrying with it the judgment of the whole world; and local councils themselves have been found to use no less language of themselves, and their canons.

There is one more point which must here be spoken of, and that is, that if St. Augustine's words be carefully weighed and tested, it will be found that he denies Apostolical authority to the practice of Fasting Communion, which again confirms, if that were necessary, the reference of the 'placuit Spiritui Sancto' to the Canon of Hippo. It is true that throughout the letter St. Augustine writes as if under restraint, which may account for some little perplexity in the passage. There may have been some inaccuracy of a copyist, which has crept into the text, and so confused the meaning. But if the words, as we have them, be carefully and accurately weighed, they will be found to assert that there was no Apostolic custom in the matter.

This is manifest from his line of argument. He says the *Church* is not to be blamed for her rule of fasting celebration, for it is clear that the Lord or His Apostles left no rule to the contrary; since, if they had, no one would have ever deviated from it. It is impossible that he should have adopted this line of argument, if he thought

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there was an Apostolic precept in favour of fasting celebration. He would have said at once, not only has there been no rule to the contrary, but there is the Apostolic custom in favour of fasting celebration. But he goes on to say that that is Apostolic which is not varied by any difference of customs but fasting celebration has its exception, therefore that is not Apostolic. Hence the Church is neither to be blamed for the rule of fasting celebration, nor for the exception of Maundy Thursday, for there is no invariable custom either way.

Again, he uses an expression which at the least accords the permission of the Apostle to take food before Communion in the mind of St. Augustine:—

When, however, the Apostle says, *speaking of this Sacrament*, 'Wherefore, brethren, when ye come together to eat, wait one for another, if any hunger *let him eat at home*, that ye come not together to condemnation,' he at once subjoins, 'but the rest will I set in order when I come.' Whence it is given to us to understand (since it was much that he should suggest in an Epistle the whole order of procedure, which is observed by the whole Church throughout the world) that that was set in order by him which is unvaried by difference of customs.

Here St. Augustine says that when St. Paul wrote, 'When ye come together to eat,' he was speaking of the Blessed Sacrament of the altar: and that he ordained that such as felt need for food should take it previously. 'If any man hunger let him eat at home, that ye come not together to condemnation.' Here is the Apostolic and Scriptural authority for this. It is no answer to say that St. Augustine was wrong in supposing the feast or agapè to have been before Communion, and that St. Chrysostom was right in reversing the order. We are not now concerned with the true interpretation of the passage in St. Paul. The fact of diversity of interpretation shows diversity of tradition, and each father probably interpreted the passage according to the practice with which he was conversant. It

may be argued that if consensus of interpretation distinctly proves that such interpretation is of divine origin,¹ dissentient testimony proves with equal force that the question is by divine permission indifferent. Both in argument and in words St. Augustine says, that there is no Apostolic precept for fasting celebration.²

The testimony, then, of St. Augustine is the same as that we find elsewhere: that the first introduction of a rule restraining from celebrating those who had not taken the prandium or heavy meal of the forenoon, was at the Council of Hippo. This must have been the opinion of the bishops of Hippo, or they would not have passed it with a 'placuit ut.' The bishops at Hippo could not have placed their own 'placuit' over a divine ordinance. This was the opinion of the bishops at Carthage, and the Mauritanian legates, who referred no further back than Hippo for this canon. This was the opinion of the bishops at Mâcon at the end of the sixth century; and this is the testimony of St. Augustine in this letter to Januaris, as we find after careful investigation of the words he has used.

¹ 'Sanctorum omnium sensus Spiritui Sancti sensus est qui eos errare non sinit.'—Cardinal Bona, *Opera*, ed. Sala, tom. iv, p. 317.

² Indeed, it could not be otherwise if St. Augustine judged the matter by his own canon of Apostolic tradition. He says (*De Baptismo contra Donatistas*, lib. iv. § 31, tom. ix. col. 140): 'That which the Universal Church holds, which was not established by councils, but has always been retained, is most rightly believed to have been handed down by no less than Apostolic authority.' In the case of Fasting Communion we can trace the institution to a council; therefore it lacks Apostolic authority. The Council of Carthage in the fifth century, the Council of Mâcon in the sixth century, and Joannes Phurnes in the twelfth century, trace the custom to the African canon of Hippo: nor can Baronius discover any earlier authority. See above, p. 52, note.

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CHAPTER XIII.

SOCRATES, THE HISTORIAN. A.D. 460.

IN order to give a complete view of all the passages
quoted from the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers on
the subject of this essay, the passage from Socrates Scho-
lasticus is here added. The whole chapter in which it
occurs is well worth reading, as it shows how great diversity
in practice was consistent with unity of faith and uninterr-
rupted intercommunion; indeed, it was composed with this
object, to show how those that were of the same faith differed
amongst themselves in practice. But the chapter is too
long to quote at length: therefore only a part from the
middle is here given. The opening of the chapter is con-
cerned with the variations about the time of keeping
Easter, and the latter part of the chapter recurs to the
same question. The rest is here quoted at length.

He tells us in the middle of the passage that certain
Egyptians near Alexandria were in the habit of celebrating
and communicating on Saturday evening after supper:
this, he says, was not usual. It is probably the latest
example of that which had been at first universal. But
when the influx of worldlings into the Church took place
on the conversion of the Court to Christianity, the habit
was restricted to one day in the year, Maundy Thursday,
the day when the institution of the Blessed Sacrament took
place. The passage is given from the old translation with
a few alterations in spelling.¹

¹ Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, lib. v. cap. xxii. London, 1709, p. 346.

No sect of religion observes the same ceremonies, although it embraces one and the same opinion concerning God. For they that are of the same faith differ amongst themselves concerning rites ; wherefore, it will not be unreasonable to add a few words concerning the different usages of Churches. First, therefore, you may find that the fasts before Easter are observed one way by some, and in a manner different by others. For they at Rome fast three continued weeks before Easter, excepting Saturdays and Sundays. The inhabitants of Illyricum, those throughout whole Achaia, and they at Alexandria, observe a fast of six weeks before Easter, which they term the forty days' fast. Others, in a different manner from them, begin their fast from the seventh week before Easter, and though they fast three five days only, part of three weeks, and that by intervals, yet, nevertheless, they also call that time the forty days' fast. And I cannot but wonder how these persons, though they disagree about the number of days, yet should in common give it the same name, to wit, the forty days' fast. Of which appellation some assign one reason, others another, according to their particular fancies and humours. You likewise find several persons disagreeing, not only about the number of the days, but differing also in their abstinency from meats. For some abstain wholly from eating of living creatures ; others, of all living creatures, feed on fish only. Othersome, together with fish, eat fowl also ; affirming, according to Moses's words, that these were made likewise of the waters. Some abstain from all manner of fruits of trees and from eggs. Others feed upon dry bread only ; othersome eat not even this. Others, having fasted till the ninth hour, feed upon any sort of food whatever, making no distinction. Again, amongst other nations there are other usages, for which innumerable reasons are assigned. And in regard no one can produce a command in writing concerning this thing, 'tis manifest that the Apostles left every one to his own will and free choice in this case ; to the end that no person might be compelled through fear or necessity to the performance of what is good. Such is the disagreement throughout the Churches about their fastings. Nor is the variety amongst them less about their Synaxes or religious assemblies. For though almost all Churches over the whole world do celebrate the Sacred Mysteries on Saturday at the period of every week, yet the Alexandrians and they at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, refuse to practise this. The Egyptians, who are neighbours to the Alexandrians, and the inhabitants of Thebais, have their religious meetings on

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Saturday; notwithstanding, they participate not of the Mysteries in such a manner as is usual amongst Christians.¹ For after they have satiated, and filled themselves with all manner of victuals, in the evening they offer and partake of the Mysteries. Again, at Alexandria, on Wednesday and on Friday, the Scriptures are read, and the Doctors expound them; and all things are performed which belong to the Church-assembly except the celebration of the Mysteries. And this is an usage of great antiquity at Alexandria. For 'tis manifest that Origen most commonly taught in the church on these days; who, being a very learned Doctor, and perceiving that the secret of the Mosaic Law was not to be expounded literally, reduced his discourse concerning the Passover to a mystical sense, asserting that there had been one only true Passover, to wit, that which our Saviour celebrated, at such time as being fastened to His Cross He vanquished the adverse powers, making use of this trophy against the devil. In the same city Alexandria, as well the catechumens as the faithful are without difference or distinction made Readers and Psalm-setters, whereas in all other Churches the faithful only are promoted to this dignity. I myself, when I was in Thessaly, knew another custom also. A clergyman in that country, if after his taking orders he does live with his wife, whom he had legally married before his being ordained, is degraded; whereas in the East all clergymen of their own accord do separate from their wives, even the Bishops themselves: notwithstanding, they do this voluntarily, not by force or compulsion of a law. For many of them, during even the time of their being Bishops, have had children of a lawful wife. Moreover, the author of this usage in Thessaly was Heliodorus, Bishop of Trica, in that country. This same custom is observed

¹ I cannot help thinking that this word *Xpianavois* is an interpolation. It does not appear in the translation of Cassiodorus in the sixth century, nor in Walafrid Strabo in the ninth. Nor can it be said that Walafrid Strabo is only quoting from Cassiodorus, for he differs from him in a remarkable word. For Cassiodorus in his *Tripartite History* renders the passage thus: '*Ægyptii vero Alexandriâ vicini, et Thebaidis habitatores Sabbato quidem collectas agunt: sed Dominica (sicut moris est) Sacramenta percipiunt: nam postquam fuerint epulati, et cibus omnibus adimpleti, circa vesperam oblatione factâ communicant.*' (*Historia Tripartita*, lib. ix. cap. xxxviii. Cassiodori *Opera*, Venetiis, 1729, tom. i. p. 323.) Does this mean that Cassiodorus regarded Sunday as commencing with the evening of Saturday? Walafrid Strabo in recording the passage has: '*Sed non sicut moris est Sacramenta percipiunt.*' (*De Rebus Ecclesiasticis*, cap. xix.) In neither of these is there any blame attached to the record; it is mentioned without much remark as an historical fact of some interest.

in Thessalonica, in Macedonia, and in Achaia. I have also known another custom in Thessaly. They baptize there on the days of Easter only. Upon which account all of them, except a very few, die unbaptized. At that Antioch which is in Syria, the site of the Church is inverted. For the Altar stands not towards the East, but towards the West. In Achaia, at Jerusalem, and in Thessaly, they go to prayers when the candles are lighted, in the same manner that the Novatians do at Constantinople. Likewise, at Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, and in Cyprus, on Saturdays and Sundays, always in the evening, after the candles are lighted, the Presbyters and Bishops expound the Scriptures. Those Novatians in the Hellespont perform not their prayers wholly after the same manner with them who live at Constantinople, but they in most things conform to the usages of the Catholic Church. In sum, in all places, and amongst all sects, you will scarcely find two Churches exactly agreeing about their Prayers. At Alexandria, a Presbyter does in no wise preach. And this usage had its beginning from such time as Arius raised a disturbance in that Church. At Rome they fast every Saturday. At Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, they exclude those from Communion who have sinned after Baptism, as the Novatians do. The same is also practised by the Macedonians in the Hellespont, and by the Quartodecimans in Asia. The Novatians in Phrygia admit not of Digamists. Those Novatians who inhabit Constantinople neither openly admit nor openly reject them. But in the western parts they are openly received. The Bishops, who in their several times presided over the Churches, were (in my judgment) the occasioners of this diversity. And those who received these rites and usages transmitted them to posterity in manner of a law, as it were. To give in a catalogue of all the rites and customs in use throughout all cities and countries, is a thing difficult, or rather impossible. But these we have produced are sufficient to demonstrate that the feast of Easter was by reason of some certain usage celebrated in a different manner in every particular province.

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PART IV.

THE JEWISH FAST BEFORE THE PASSOVER.

A CURIOUS argument was put out in a newspaper some time back in support of the necessity of the fast before Communion, and it has been repeated in a little tract on the Holy Communion published lately.¹ It is this, that,—

It carries on into the Christian Passover the rule which the Jews observed, as they do to this day. When the Apostles came to the Last Supper they were fasting, so the only food they had eaten before the institution of the Sacrament was itself a religious and sacrificial feast. For on that occasion the Jewish and the Christian rites melted into one.

This is the first reason assigned for the practice of 'not taking anything to eat or drink from the previous midnight,' and an astonishing reason it seems to be: first, because the fast before the Passover was only from half-past four in the afternoon, and was to last two or three hours, in order that the unpalatable biscuits and bitter herbs might be eaten with seeming appetite, and did *not* last from the previous midnight; secondly, because it is extremely doubtful whether the Supper was the Paschal Supper (for it was not, according to St. John, the time of

¹ *The Christian Passover; or, Notes on the Holy Communion*, by the Editors of the *Priest's Prayer Book*, 1873, p. 40. One of the editors bears the initials 'R. F. L.' The letter alluded to appeared in the *Church Times* of June 4, 1869, and was signed 'Richard F. Littledale.' See below, p. 333.

the Passover of the Jews), so that it cannot be certainly known whether the Apostles had or had not eaten for two hours and a half before the Supper; lastly, because it seems to imply that the Paschal Supper did not break the fast.

I propose now to say something on these points; and first, as to the duration of the 'fast' so called. Here is the Latin translation of the passage in the *Mishna* which deals with the question. It is not worth while troubling the printer with the Hebrew; the Latin of Surenhuys¹ is given first:—

Vesperī Paschatis propē Mincham non comedet homo, nisi obortæ fuerint tenebræ. Etiam pauper in Israele non comedet, nisi inclinatus.

Compare this with the English translation from the Hebrew made by the two learned Rabbis, De Sola and Raphall:²—

It is not lawful for any individual to eat aught on the eve of the Passover from about the time of Minchah until after dark: even the meanest in Israel shall not eat until they have arranged themselves in proper order at ease round the table; a person shall not have less than four cups of wine, even if they be given him from the charitable fund devoted to the support of the very poor.

That is the whole of the first section of the chapter. Now let us see what time is denoted by the Latin 'propē Mincham' or the English 'about the time of Minchah,' and then how soon the restriction against eating is removed, in order to ascertain how long a time the Jews were to abstain from food.

The following³ is the explanation of Moses Ben Maimon, or Maimonides:—

¹ *Mishna*, ed. Surenhusius, Amstelædami, 1699, vol. ii. p. 172; *Treatise Pesachim*, cap. x. § 1.

² *Eighteen Treatises from the Mishna*, translated by the Rev. D. A. De Sola and the Rev. M. J. Raphall. Second Edition, London, 1845, p. 122.

³ From the edition of the *Mishna* by Surenhuys, quoted above. Moshe

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vol. ii. p. 172; *Treatise*

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Near Minchah: at that time when there is still two hours and a half of daylight, for that time is called *Minchah*. But the reason why we bind a man to this is, that he is bound to eat the unleavened bread the first night; and a man must be hungry to eat unleavened bread with relish. But when we forbid eating, it is not only to be understood of eating bread, because bread (i.e. leavened bread) must not be eaten then, and we are forbidden to eat unleavened bread until the particular time when it ought to be eaten, but it is forbidden to eat MUCH¹ of other food. Again, we must eat with reclined body, as kings and nobles are accustomed to eat, which is a sign of freedom.

Maimonides here gives us a hint of the time when the abstinence before the Passover commenced—it was about two hours and a half before sunset. He also helps us to the reason of the prohibition—viz. that the man may eat with an appetite.

Surenhuys gives us also the remarks of the Rabbi Bar-tenora,² which are as follows:—

About Minchah: a little before Minchah, half an hour, at four o'clock; for the daily sacrifice was sacrificed at half-past four, which is the time of the Minchah, but half an hour before Minchah is four o'clock, *that no man shall eat*, that he may eat the unleavened bread with a relish, out of respect for the commandment. But it is clear that he may not eat bread, because leaven is forbidden six hours and a half before, and more. . . . But here our author speaks of other food, that he *fill not his stomach* with them, and be unable to eat the Passover.

The two³ come practically to the same thing, that a man is not to eat after about four o'clock or so. But, then,

ben Maimon ibn Joseph, known as 'Rambam,' was born at Cordova on the Passover Sabbath, A.D. 1135.

¹ It is curious that the gloss upon the phrase, 'a man shall not eat,' is that he shall not eat *much*. Does this help us to understand St. Paul's statement in Acts xxvii. 33, 'This day is the *fourteenth* day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken *nothing*?' i.e. (says Mr. Cook, *Commentary*, 1850, p. 301), no regular meals. See above, p. 128.

² Lived about 1510.

³ Lightfoot cites three other Rabbis, who give a precisely similar gloss on the text of the *Mishna* to those given here from Surenhuys. Lightfoot,

they agree that the man may eat a little, as it would seem, after dark has commenced. For Maimonides says that he must not eat *much*, and Bartenora, that he must not *fill his stomach*. It might be thought from this that the authors of the 'Christian Passover' thought the Apostles were *fasting* because they had not 'eaten much,' or had not 'filled their stomachs.' But, waiving this, it would be well to see when the Paschal Supper commenced, so as to test the duration of this imposed fast.

The hour would seem to have varied slightly. It was to be over before midnight; and the roasting the sacrifices was to commence at sundown, according to the oral law: 'When it became dark, they all went out to roast their paschal sacrifices.' We may suppose, then, that, on an average, the supper commenced at about nine o'clock; so that the abstinence from food would have been four or five hours. This would be about the ordinary interval between meals, or even less; so that there was not much claim on their self-denial in this so-called 'fast.' It was clearly meant to provide that the Paschal Supper should be a real meal, and not only a pretence. A man, therefore, was to come to it as he would to an ordinary meal, and not immediately after other food.

With all due respect to the two learned authors of the 'Christian Passover,' this does seem a very strange reason to place first, why 'on the day when we prepare to receive the Holy Communion, we should not take anything to eat or drink from the previous midnight.' We are to fast from midnight, because the Jews did *not*: and because they laid down rules that a man was not to eat for four or five hours before the Paschal Supper, in order

Temple Service, chap. xiii. *Works*, London, 1684, vol. i. p. 959. They all give the reason for the abstinence from food, that the supper may be eaten *cum desiderio*, with an appetite: it was not, therefore, from devotion.

¹ *Mishna, Pesachim*, cap. v. § 10, ed. Surenhusius, vol. ii. p. 154; ed. De Sola and Raphall, p. 110.

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4, vol. i. p. 959. They all he supper may be eaten *cum* from devotion. sius, vol. ii. p. 154 ; ed. De

that he might come to it with his usual appetite for a meal.

But it will be said that there must be some grounds for the interpretation given in the letter in the newspaper alluded to above. Here is the main point of the letter as it stands, with its italics and capital letters, in the 'Church Times' ¹ for June 4, 1869 :—

What is yet more to the point is this. *The Jews were bound to come to the Paschal Supper* FASTING. The tenth chapter of the treatise *Pesachim* (Passover) in the Talmud begins thus :—'It is not lawful for any individual to eat aught on the eve of the Passover, from about the time of *Minchah* [the morning Sacrifice] till dark : even the meanest in Israel shall not eat till they have arranged themselves in proper order at ease round the table.'

It will be seen that the letter quotes the translation of the Rabbis De Sola and Raphall (which has been given above), the only deviation being the omission of the 'after' before 'dark,' and the substitution of the word 'till' for 'until.' But the words between the square brackets are the words seemingly of the author of the letter, who signs his name, 'Richard F. Littledale.'

Now, as there is no *erratum* saying, 'for *morning* sacrifice, read *evening* sacrifice,' we must believe that the writer of the letter thought that the word *Minchah*, when it stood alone without any qualification, always meant the *morning* sacrifice. Undoubtedly, if the author of the letter be Dr. Littledale, his name will weigh much in favour of this interpretation.

But he stands alone, and gives no authority, and the writer has failed to discover a single author who agrees with Dr. Littledale.

In the passage in question, it has been seen that the 'best commentators' agree in understanding *Minchah* to mean some time in the evening. Let us recapitulate.

¹ The *Church Times*, vol. vii. p. 215, col. 2, June 4, 1869.

1. The giant of authority, Moses Maimonides (born A.D. 1135, died 1204), of whom the Rabbis say, 'From Moses to Moses, there is none like Moses,' has been quoted, saying that *Minchah* means a time when the day has still two hours and a half to run.

Then Lightfoot¹ quotes the three following Rabbis of lesser note :—

2. Rabbi Alfes (A.D. 1088).

3. Rabbi Solomon (cir. A.D. 1200).

4. Rabbi Samuel (cir. A.D. 1250).

5. Rabbi Obadiah de Bartenora (cir. A.D. 1510) has been quoted above, agreeing with these other Rabbis. Surenhuys,² of his commentaries says (as well as those of Maimonides), that they are 'Commentaria omnium Rabbiorum probatissima.'

6. Next we find the elder Buxtorf (A.D. 1564), 'the prince of Hebrew Scholars,' has no other opinion. His words are,³ 'pridie Paschatis sub *vesperam*, oblationis tempore, quod *Mincha* vocant;' that is, On the Passover eve at evening at the time of the oblation, which time they call *Minchah*.

7. Our own Lightfoot,⁴ ponderous in all such knowledge, quotes the opinion approvingly, thus :—

Near the time of the *Minchah* (say the Glossaries upon that tradition) meaneth a little before the *evening* sacrifice; and from that time they might eat nothing, that they might eat the unleavened bread, which was commanded, with appetite, for the honour of the command.

8. Surenhuys himself, the editor of the 'noble work, the favourite edition of the *Mishna*,'⁵ does not disagree.

¹ *Temple Service*, chap. xiii.; *Works*, 1684, vol. i. p. 959.

² *Mishna*, vol. i. *Prefatio ad Lectorem*.

³ *Synagoga Judaica*, cap. xviii. Basileæ, 1680, p. 404. So, too, in his *Lexicon Talmudicum*, Basileæ, 1629, s.v. *Minchah*, col. 1225; and again, s.v. *Shakarith*, col. 2370; and also in his *Lexicon Hebraicum*, Glasgure, 1824, s.v. *Minchah*.

⁴ In the place above quoted.

⁵ Etheridge's *Hebrew Literature*, p. 125.

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So that, if we only took the above authorities, we could hardly think that even Dr. Littledale could outweigh them. But in the first treatise of the *Mishna* we find the word *Minchah* used, and the meaning plentifully discussed. The following passage is from the translation of De Sola and Raphall :¹—

The morning prayer may be said till noon ; R. Jehudah saith, until the fourth hour. The *Minchah* prayer until the evening ; R. Jehudah saith, until the expiration of half the time appointed for the *Minchah* sacrifice.

This is the first time the phrase occurs in the *Mishna*, and we have several explanations given in Surenhuys,² all of which are here given.

(1) Maimonides writes thus :—

Peleg hamminchah, *dimidium Minchæ*, is when there still remain two hours and a half of day. He who prays until night, i.e. till sunset, let him say the prayer called *Minchah*.

(2) Rabbi de Bartenora writes at greater length thus :—

Ad peleg hamminchah, usque ad dimidium Minchæ, the time of Little Minchah is from half-past three until night, which is two hours and a half, and so the *peleg hamminchah* [the division of the Minchah] is an hour and a quarter. But the solution of this question is, that anyone may do as this doctor, or as that holds ; but he who wishes to do as the wise, and say the prayer of Minchah up to night-time, let him do it, but under this condition, that he say not the prayer of night at that time, &c.

(3) The learned Surenhuys himself comes in here with his help, which runs as follows :—

(4) It is asked in the Tosephot³ at the beginning of the second chapter of Pesachim, fol. 107, how the *afternoon* prayer can

¹ *Eighteen Treatises from the Mishna*, London, 1845, p. 5. Treatise, *Berachoth* (blessings), chap. iv. § 1.

² *Mishna*, Amstelædami, 1698, vol. i. p. 13 ; see also Chiarini, *Le Talmud de Babylon*, Leipzig, 1831, vol. ii. p. 71 sq.

³ 'The Tosefot are exegetical additions to the Gemara by later Rabbins.' —Etheridge, *Hebrew Literature*, p. 178.

be called the prayer of the Minchah, since the Minchah is offered in the morning as well? The answer is, that there is always added to the morning Minchah the word *Shakarith*, and therefore it is called *Minchath Shakarith*, and is thus sufficiently distinguished from the evening Minchah. Maimon says, indeed, that *Minchah* is a noun which denotes a certain time of day, and that this is called the *second prayer*, but he does not give the reason; (5) but R. Moses ben Nachman [born at Gerona A.D. 1194] remarks, that it is so called because then the sun rests, as it were, from pouring out his heat; and in this sense it is said in the Targum *limnaach yoma*,¹ in the repose of the day, and this is the Great Minchah, of which the wise speak.

(6) Next we have the learned note of our own countryman,² who was snatched by an early death, at the age of thirty-one, from adding to his knowledge, which was already of European reputation. His name is best known under the Latin form Guisius:—

Afternoon. *Minchah*, in the definition of Maimonides, embraces that space of the day when there remain two and a half hours. Therefore, according to him, the middle of that time falls on the end of three quarters of the eleventh hour [a quarter to five o'clock]. So, too, Bartenora. But far otherwise writes a certain Arabic commentator on the Liturgy of the Alexandrian Jews, a MS. which the illustrious Robert Huntington³ sent over from the East. (7) He explains it thus: 'The time when these prayers are said extends from the time when the decline of the sun becomes manifest—viz. from half-past one to sunset.' And indeed Maimonides himself, later in his *Yad Hachasaka*, comes to the same opinion. But he remarks, that the whole afternoon is divided into two *Menachoth*, of which the first extends from half-past twelve to half-past three, and is called *Minchah gedolah*, the Great Minchah; that which follows until a quarter to five, or rather to sunset, is called *Minchah qetannah*, or Little Minchah.

¹ The allusion is to the Targum of Onkelos, on Gen. iii. 8. See Walton's *Polyglott*, vol. i. p. 11, col. 1.

² William Guise, a brilliant light in Oriental scholarship; he was a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford; he was born in 1653, and died in 1684.

³ Another learned alumnus of Oxford. He was born in 1636 and died in 1701, twelve days after he had been consecrated Bishop of Raphoe; his manuscripts were bought for the Bodleian.

the Minchah is offered that there is always *hakarith*, and therefore sufficiently distinguished indeed, that *Minchah* day, and that this is the reason; (5) but D. 1194] remarks, that it was, from pouring the Targum *limnaach* the Great Minchah, of

of our own country-death, at the age of knowledge, which was name is best known

n of Maimonides, em-remain two and a half e middle of that time leventh hour [a quarter ut far otherwise writes argy of the Alexandrian Huntington³ sent over 'The time when these hen the decline of the t one to sunset.' And ad *Hachazaka*, comes to at the whole afternoon e first extends from half ed *Minchah gedolah*, the il a quarter to five, or ah, or Little Minchah.

n Gen. iii. 8. See Walton's scholarship; he was a Fellow 53, and died in 1684. as born in 1636 and died in ed Bishop of Raphoe; his

He lays down that the whole afternoon time is suitable for these prayers.

It is quite clear, then, that wherever we turn we find it taken for granted, and agreed upon, that *Minchah*, when used alone, and without the distinctive qualification, is indicative of some time in the afternoon or evening. When, therefore, we find elsewhere in the Talmud *Minchah* used, we expect to find the afternoon or evening spoken of. Thus in the treatise 'Sabbath,' we read in De Sola and Raphall,¹ 'A man is not to sit down to the barber near the time of Minchah, till he has said his prayers.' In Surenhuys² the word is rendered unhesitatingly *vespertinum sacrificium*; and just the same kind of commentary is given in this passage.³

But if Dr. Littledale still thinks that the word *Minchah*, when used alone, does mean the morning sacrifice, how will he interpret the account of an event which happened two thousand years before Maimonides? In the history of the challenge of the prophets of Baal by Elijah, we read in the Authorized Version (1 Kings xviii. 29, 36):—

And it came to pass, when mid-day was past, and they prophesied until the *time* of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that *there was* neither voice nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. . . . And it came to pass at the *time* of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near.

Now most of our children know that when words are in italics in our version it is because they have no place in the original, but are inserted to give the real meaning of

¹ *Eighteen Treatises of the Mishna*, p. 37, treatise, *Sabbath*, chap. i. § 2.

² *Mishna*, vol. ii. p. 3; see also *Constitutiones Tractatus Talmudici Schabbath Latine versa a S. Schmidt*, Lipsiæ, 1661, p. 2.

³ The same interpretation of *Minchah* is given in the following authorities, who are not quoted at length, but may be referred to if the reader desire more:—Mr. Selig Newman, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, London, 1834, p. 347; Zanolini, *Lexicon Chaldaico-Rabbinicum*, Patavii, 1747, p. 258; Peter Guarin, *Lexicon Hebraicum et Chaldaico-Biblicum*, Paris, 1746, pars i. col. 1136.

the passage. The exact rendering here, then, would be, 'at the going up of the Minchah.' This would be, according to the letter in the 'Church Times,' *the morning sacrifice*. But apart from the unanimous consent of all commentators, common sense requires that the gloss of our Authorized Version should be accepted, even if we do not translate with Buxtorf, 'donec ascenderet *tempus vespertinum*.'

If, therefore, Dr. Littledale has discovered in his search after knowledge that the Jewish Rabbis of greatest name and Christian Hebraists of greatest fame (not to mention the unknown Arabic commentator), for the last eight hundred years, are all wrong, he surely should give the world the reasons for his opinion, and not let it stand on his own *ipse dixit*. But if he does not do this, it is to be hoped in all unsold copies of the seventh volume of the 'Church Times' he will put the following erratum:—

P. 215, col. 2, line 47, for *morning* read *evening*.

This letter probably misled Mr. Oxenham, at whose vigorous boldness I do not wonder so much as at his extraordinary reference. He preaches thus:—

We should remember that that 'Supper' was no common meal, the food they ate was no common food—it was a sacred sacrificial feast, one of the most solemn religious rites of the Jewish Church, and one to which they who shared it were bidden to come fasting. The Paschal Supper, therefore, bears no comparison with any ordinary meal, and the fact that the Apostles had eaten of that sacred feast before their first communion affords no ground whatever to justify us in eating ordinary food. (Vide Freeman's 'Principles of D. S.,' vol. ii. cap. ii. sects. ii. and iii.; also letter on Evening Communion, 'Guardian,' Nov. 27, 1872.)

Now that the Last Supper was a sacred meal is most probable *à priori*, and as such we most certainly must

¹ *The Duty of Fasting Communion*, by F. N. Oxenham, M.A., Second Edition, p. 13.

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now regard it ; and the great divine, Mede,¹ held that 'the Bread and the Wine, whereof the holy Supper was instituted, were the Minchah, or meat and drink offering of the Passover.' So this need not surprise us ; but what can we say to Mr. Oxenham's references ? The letter in the 'Guardian' is signed 'Richard F. Littledale,' and the remarks are much the same as that in the 'Church Times,' the *πρότον ψῆδον* of which has been animadverted on before. But can it be believed ? Archdeacon Freeman, in the passage quoted, 1. mentions no word of fasting ; and 2. argues that the Last Supper was NOT the Paschal Supper ! He argues, and in the writer's humble opinion well, that it was probably the usual Sabbath Eve service of the synagogue. This, therefore, would scatter to the winds all arguments that the Apostles were fasting, based upon the notion that it was the Paschal Supper.

If, then, we must ask Dr. Littledale the grounds of his contravening the opinions of eight centuries of Doctors, may we ask Mr. Oxenham for his commentary upon Archdeacon Freeman ?

But, say the authors of the 'Christian Passover,' the Jews observe fasting before the Passover Supper 'to this day.' Unfortunately they have given no reference, and neither the writer nor one of the most learned Rabbis in London, whom he has consulted, has been able to discover the authorities for the assertion. Indeed, the following extract from a Talmudic tract² gives a reason why no pious Jew, with one exception in each family, does ever fast in the month of the Passover :—

Decision 2. Why do they not fast in the month of Nisan ? Because on the first of Nisan the Tabernacle was founded, and

¹ Epistle lviii. ; *Works*, London, 1672, p. 826.

² Tract *Soferim*, chap. xxi. §§ 2 and 3. This is the first of the *Massektoth Qetannah*, or small tracts which form a kind of appendix to the Talmud, and were written after the Talmud was complete. See Etheridge, *Hebrew Literature*, p. 186. The fast of the firstborn is alluded to in Calmet, *Dictionary of Bible*, s.v. *Passover*, London, 1823, vol. ii.

the twelve chiefs offered their offerings for twelve days, a day for every tribe; and each one used to make festival on his day. And so, in the time to come, the Temple was to be built in Nisan, to make good what is said, 'There is nothing new under the sun' [Eccles. i. 9].

Decision 3. Therefore, they say not prayers all the days of Nisan, and do not fast till Nisan is over, except the firstborn, who fast on the eve of the Passover; and the Essenes, on account of the Passover cake, that they may assemble for it with desire.

Here is the one exception, the firstborn, who fast on the eve of the Passover: there is no other fast known now. This fast, too, was unknown in our Lord's day. For there is no trace of it in the Talmud itself. The Talmudic tracts testify to their being later than the Talmud by their not being incorporated in it. Then the Talmudic commentary is later than the text of the *Mishna*, and the *Mishna* did not take its concrete form until some time after our Blessed Lord.¹ It is quite clear, then, that the fast of the firstborn on the Passover eve (in remembrance of their safety while the Egyptian firstborn were slain) was unknown in our Lord's day, as it is not heard of for some seven or eight hundred years after His death.

The learned Rabbi before mentioned assured the present writer that, though the Jews in Russia and Poland, and many of the English Jews, do not eat *bread* (i.e. leavened bread) the day before the Passover, they eat other food; but refrain so long before the Passover that they may eat, with some degree of appetite at all events, a small portion

¹ The *Mishna* is the essence of the oral law, which was said to have been handed down from the time of Moses. It seems to have taken its present form in the third century after our Blessed Lord. Upon this there have been two commentaries written, one at Tiberias, called after Jerusalem, and another longer one, called the Babylonian. This latter dates from the sixth century. The *Mishna*, with its *Gemara* (a quasi-commentary), made up the Talmud. The extra Talmudic tracts must of necessity be later than the sixth century, otherwise their materials would have been incorporated in the text of the Talmud itself. See Etheridge's *Hebrew Literature*, p. 114 seqq. Kitto's *Bible Cyclopedia*, s.v. *Talmud*. A concise account may be found in Charles Butler's *Hore Biblicæ*, Oxford, 1799, p. 10 and following.

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of the Passover cake. He also said that whatever rule
there was, it was not 'from religion;' in no sense did they
regard it as a religious fast, and there was no sin in
not attending to the rule of not eating leavened bread at
this interval of time. Thus, the ancient and modern Jews
themselves seem quite ignorant of the devotion of 'fasting,'
before the Passover ascribed to them by the inventive
exigences of modern rigorists.

Again, it is at the least very doubtful indeed whether
the supper at which the Lord instituted the blessed Sacra-
ment was, or was intended to be, the usual Paschal Supper.
To the writer, the whole weight of the argument seems to
show that it was *not* the Paschal Supper, and was not
thought to be so by the Apostles. This is not the place to
argue the matter out, but the main reasons for this view
are here given as concisely as possible.

The whole question turns on the point as to the day
on which the Lord was crucified. If the Lord suffered
on Friday, Nisan 14, then the Last Supper was not the true
Passover feast. That such was the case depends on the
following evidence:—

I. The almost universal tradition of the primitive
Fathers.¹ This seems a sweeping statement; but two
remarkable passages of St. Hippolytus² (d. cir. A.D. 240)
will alone be quoted, for lack of room. Speaking against a
quartodeciman, he says:—

But he has fallen into error by not perceiving that at the
time when Christ suffered, He did not eat the Passover of
the Law! for He was the Passover that had been of old pro-
claimed.

And again:—

He, who said of old, 'I will not any more eat the Passover,'

¹ The original difficulties have been heightened by the controversy about
azymes, as to whether the Lord consecrated in fermented or unfermented
bread. For references, see Greswell, *Diss.* xli. vol. iii. p. 168, sq. Oxford, 1837.

² Clark's *Ante-Nicene Library*, vol. ix. part ii. p. 94.

probably partook of supper before the Passover. But the Passover He did not eat, but He suffered, for it was not time for eating it.

II. Jewish tradition, as seen in the Talmud: 'On Passover *Eve* they crucified Jesus.'¹

III. St. John's statements on the subject, which are clear—viz. (a) xviii. 28, 'That they might eat the Passover.' This phrase always means eating the Paschal Lamb in the night of Nisan 15. Hence, 'early' on Friday morning, Nisan 15 had not commenced: compare Exod. xii. 43, 44; 2 Chron. xxx. 18; 2 Esdras vi. 21 (LXX). For though 'the Passover' sometimes was used to express other sacrifices beside the lamb, yet the phrase 'eat the Passover' seems never used of any but the true Paschal Supper.

(b) The special note of time given in St. John xiii. 1, 'before the feast of the Passover.'

(c) St. John xix. 14: 'The preparation of the Passover.' This can only mean the day preceding the Paschal Supper—viz. the day ending with sunset of Nisan 14.

(d) St. John xix. 31: 'Great was the day of that Sabbath,' is the exact grammatical rendering of the passage. This could only be said of the concurrence of the weekly Sabbath with the Paschal Supper of Nisan 15: 'Great was the day which fell on that Saturday.'

IV. The peculiar character of the message sent to the 'goodman of the house' would seem to denote something unusual, and not the usual Paschal feast. This is seen from (a) 'The master saith;' (b) The confidential and peculiar terms of the message; and (c) The choice of the two chiefest Apostles as messengers, St. Luke xxii. 8, &c.

V. The Lord's saying in St. Luke xxii. 15 seems to point to something unusual and peculiar.

¹ *Talmud Babyl. Treatise Sanhedrin*, vi. 2, fol. 43 A. It is erased in modern editions by the censor. Compare also Bishop Ellicott, *Historical Lectures on the Life of our Lord Jesus Christ*, London, 1862, p. 322, note 3, where see the whole note.

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supper, 'early' on Friday
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Bishop Ellicott, *Historical*
London, 1862, p. 322, note 3,

VI. There are certain hints that the day of our blessed
Lord's death was not marked by that solemn rest which was
required on the Paschal Sabbath. These are mostly taken
from the three Synoptical Gospels. It must be remembered
that Nisan 15 was one of the most strict Sabbaths of the
whole year; compare Exodus xii. 22. After sunset of
Nisan 14 no work was done, and no man left the house.
If, then, this were the night when our Lord was seized,
(a) our Saviour and His disciples brake the law, for they
left the house; (b) so did the persecuting Jews; (c) so
also did the whole Sanhedrin, who also brake the oral law,
which forbade a trial on that day; (d) so did the disciples who
buried the Lord; (e) so did the holy women who prepared
spices before the Sabbath in its severity commenced,
St. Luke xxiii. 56; (f) so did Simon the Cyrenian, who
was coming home from his work in the field; (g) neither
would the day have been called 'the Preparation,' or 'the
Preparation of the Passover,' a name ever since given to
the day of the Lord's death in the Christian Church.
(h) Judas was supposed to have gone out to buy some-
thing, whereas the strictness of the Sabbath precluded the
possibility of buying and selling.

VII. Lastly, the antitypical nature of the Lord's sacri-
fice (1 Cor. v. 7). This would seem to have required
that at the moment of the Lord's death the Paschal Lamb
should have been sacrificed. Indeed, if the Sabbath of
Nisan 15 that year coincided with the weekly Sabbath,
then probably the supernatural darkness prevented¹ the
offering of the daily sacrifice of the lamb, as well as the
Paschal Lamb: a fitting cessation in the presence of the
Sacrifice of the true Lamb of God. The same may be

¹ 'When the day before the Passover happened on Friday, the daily offer-
ing was slaughtered half an hour after the sixth hour, and sacrificed half an
hour after the seventh hour, and the Passover sacrifice after it.' (*Mishna*,
De Sola and Raphall, p. 107; *Pesachim*, cap. v. § 1.) See Freeman's *Prin-
ciples of Divine Service*, vol. ii. p. 299, note 1; also Greswell, *Dissertations on
a Harmony of the Gospels*, Oxford, 1837, vol. iii. p. 166.

said of the offering of the wave-sheaf of the firstfruits of the harvest, on the morrow after the Paschal Sabbath, that wonderful type of the Resurrection.

But be this as it may, the question is too doubtful for the admission of the argument that the Apostles must have been fasting, even for four or five hours, because it was the Paschal Supper they were to partake of.

Next, it seems to be implied that the Paschal Supper was not supposed to break this 'fast' of four or five hours. 'When the Apostles came to the Last Supper they were fasting, so the only food they had eaten before the institution of the Sacrament was itself a religious and sacrificial feast.' This is given as a reason for Christians fasting from the midnight previous, because the Apostles had not taken food for four or five hours, in order that they might eat the more before the institution! It seems strange. It would seem as if the Eucharist was to be a memorial of the Jews' Passover from such an argument. At all events, so far were the early Church from thinking the Last Supper did not break the fast of the Apostles, that they had in some places a feast in commemoration of the Last Supper, and celebrated the Eucharist afterwards. It was only in modern times that the Eucharist was said not to break the fast, as some used to refrain from Communion when they were fasting,¹ lest they should break the fast.

Indeed, if the Jews did fast before the Passover, for which there is no ground, it would be perchance an interesting historical fact, but can hardly be pressed into a 'reason' why a Christian should fast before Holy Communion. This only depends on an oral law, whereas the strictness of the ceremonial Sabbath, depending on a written law, has been entirely abolished. For the true interpretation of the Fourth Commandment is that still

¹ See Tertullian, *De Oratione*, cap. xiv.: 'Similiter et Stationum diebus non putant plerique sacrificiorum orationibus interveniendum, quod statio solvenda sit accepto corpore Domini.'—*Opera*, ed. Rigaltius, Paris, 1675, p. 135.

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Rigaltius, Paris, 1675, p. 135.

given by the English Church, in spite of puritanical opposi-
tion,¹ 'to serve God truly all the days of my life.'

[I could have wished to have omitted this chapter, but
this does not seem practicable. I feel, therefore, bound to
give Dr. Littledale's answer, which is in a letter to the
'Church Review' of August 2, 1873 :—

Mr. Kingdon has corrected a mistake into which I fell in
alleging that the *Minchah* was the *morning* sacrifice referred to by
the Talmudic precept, that on the eve of the Passover no one of
Israel was to eat from the time of *Minchah* till after dark. He
has proved that the *evening* sacrifice is meant, but he has entirely
misused his correction, because he has tried to make it prove that
the Jews did not insist on a fast before Paschal Communion as of
religious obligation. All that is affected by my mistake is the
length of the fast, not the *fact* of it. And as in Palestine dark
comes on just after sunset, when the new day, according to Jewish
reckoning, begins, the rule is exactly parallel with the ancient
Christian use of not eating after midnight, when Mass was just
before dawn. Mr. Kingdon's School, liking Anglican prettinesses
and æsthetics, objects strongly to asceticism, and wishes to have
no fast at all, for no other reason than that it is not pleasant to go
without food. And with that end it mixes up two perfectly distinct
questions—the frequency and the goodness of Communions.
. . . I had rather see three Communions a year made fasting
than fifty-two after the use of St. Andrew's, Wells Street.

It must have cost Dr. Littledale much to write this. I
do not, therefore, wish to take exception to it, as I hope now
he has begun he will go on, and some day withdraw all of
the above which is not already a retractation. So far as I
can learn from books or living authorities, such a thing as a
religious fast before the Passover (except in the case of
firstborn in later times) has always been unknown until Dr.
Littledale first introduced the pleasant conceit.]

¹ The bishops answered the Puritans' objection: 'It is not true that there
is nothing in that answer which refers to the Fourth Commandment; for the
last words of the answer do orderly relate to the last commandment of the
first table, which is the Fourth.'—*English Puritanism: Documents*, Kent
& Co. 1862, p. 169.



PART V.

THE ADVISABILITY OF FASTING COMMUNION.

N EARLY thirty years back a young priest, shortly after the Embertide at which he was ordained, was staying at Hursley. It was suggested that he should celebrate almost for the first time in the parish church, in order to release the vicar, who wished to celebrate at one of the hamlets. This offer having been accepted, he said on the Saturday evening, 'Please do not expect me at breakfast to-morrow.' This gave rise to some conversation, which was reported to Keble. Upon being appealed to, he said with a sad smile, 'It is a good custom;' and said nothing more. Herein, be it said, he was strictly accurate. He did not say, as some would now, it is a law of the Church to be obeyed under pain of mortal sin, but 'it is a good custom.' This opinion, it is clear, he held to the last, for, in the last public letter he wrote, which was published in the '*Literary Churchman*' four months before his death, he earnestly deprecated such extravagance of language as, for example, Mr. Oxenham thought well to preach and print. He wrote as follows: '—

I for one rejoice whenever and wherever I see that kind of revival successfully and tranquilly accomplished. But the success will be more complete, and the satisfaction more perfect, when

¹ *Letters of Spiritual Counsel and Guidance*, by the late Rev. J. Keble, M.A., Parkers, 1870, p. 239. It is also given in Coleridge's *Life of Keble*, 2nd edition, 1869, p. 539.

those who have the work at heart shall have ceased to indulge themselves in invidious comparisons and scornful criticisms on such among their brethren as do not yet see their way to it ; and when, on certain kindred subjects, *they have learned to make candid allowance for the difference between our circumstances and those with a view to which the Primitive Canons were framed. I allude particularly to the disparaging tone sometimes used in speaking of mid-day Communion, with small consideration, as it seems to me, for the aged and infirm, and others who cannot come early.*

This opinion is dated December 1865, and Keble 'fell asleep on the 29th of March' 1866 : it must be regarded, therefore, as the last expression of his ripened view, and it is concisely the same view as that maintained in this essay, uttered in more gentle and beautiful language.

That in England at least it is not a law, but, as Keble said, it is everywhere 'a good custom,' is the testimony also of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, who is the English authority most relied on by modern rigorists amongst ourselves. He writes thus :¹—

It is a Catholic *custom* that they who receive the Holy Communion should receive it fasting. This is *not a duty* commanded by God ; but unless it be necessary to eat, he that despises this custom gives nothing but the testimony of an evil mind.

It must not be supposed for a moment that it is my wish in any respect to despise this custom : this is far from my thoughts, and always has been since I was confirmed, a quarter of a century ago. Twenty years ago there was but one weekly celebration at Cambridge, and that at mid-day. This made some of us liable to the primitive charge of heresy for turning Sunday into a fasting day. No, the custom is in no way despised. But it is argued that there is no law or canon binding in England now, so as to make those that are unable to follow this custom liable to a charge of mortal sin as having broken a positive precept.

¹ *Ductor Dubitantium*, bk. iii. chap. iv. Rule 15, *Works*, ed. Eden, 1855, vol. x. p. 358.

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It is argued here that, as a matter of fact, the canons enforcing this in England have become abrogated by disuser, and by the unchecked prevalence of the contrary custom, the original reason of the canons having passed away. Indeed, the same reason does not exist now as it did even in Bishop Taylor's days. His 'Ductor Dubitantium' (from which the above extract is taken) was passing through the press when the following was published. The passage is from a book published in 1659, and is quoted by the elder D'Israeli in his 'Curiosities of Literature':—

This coffa-drink hath caused a great sobriety among all nations: formerly apprentices, clerks, &c. used to take their morning draughts in all beer or wine, which often made them unfit for business; now they play the good fellows in this wakeful and civil drink.

If they were unfit for business, how much more for devotion! But this unfitness in the morning has now passed away, and with it the absolute necessity of Fasting Communion. In its place the contrary custom has prevailed, and to do away with this now would imperil amongst us in England the present most laudable habit of frequent Communion.

Such at least was the opinion of John Mason Neale during his last sickness. It is no breach of confidence to publish his opinion, because he was aware when he gave it, that it was asked with the object of ascertaining his ripened view; and I have especial leave to publish the narrative. One of his oldest friends visited him shortly before his death, and among other questions of the day discussed with him the matter of obligatory Fasting Communion, a subject which was then attracting notice. After some conversation, he expressed his full agreement with his friend, that it was NOT binding on persons living in the

¹ *Curiosities of Literature*, by I. D'Israeli, Routledge, 1867, p. 296.
'Essay on the Introduction of Tea, Coffee, and Chocolate.'

world within our communion, and that it would be harmful to try to enforce it; but, at the same time, he thought it should be held to bind those who had specially devoted themselves to a more devout life, sisters of mercy, and others who followed a religious profession; that is, that it should be made a rule of special devotion. He had specially present to his mind the danger of attempting to enforce a rule which in England had been proved to make Communion less frequent than the early Church desired.

With this deliberate decision of a master in Israel most (it is hoped) will agree. If persons wish to show their deepening love, let this be one of their rules; but do not let them show spiritual pride in despising or condemning others who do not, or who cannot, fast from the previous midnight.

Has it not been found, over and over again, that attempts at extreme rigour do not command obedience for long? In this very matter of fasting this may be seen. The monks, whose strict rule kept them on very low diet, were terribly tempted to eat in secret at forbidden hours. They hid pieces of bread in their sleeves or elsewhere, to stay the gnawings of hunger between their scanty meals. St. Basil¹ is very severe upon such as did this; and St. John Cassian also mentions it as a grievous falling away.² But there is much wisdom in the rule which forbids men to fast

¹ Thus the important Council of Tribur (A.D. 895) gives this as a reason for lessening penance for murder: 'Nobis tamen quia pastores ovium Christi sumus pro moderni temporis qualitate, et hominum fragilitate bonum et utile videtur ut auctoritate synodali modum castigationis imponamus, ne prolixum tempus poenitentiae generet fastidium negligentibus.'—Co. Triburiense, can. xlvii. Carranza, p. 597.

² *Sermo de Renunciatione Saeculi*, § 8, *Opera*, ed. Gaume, tom. ii. pp. 290, 291: 'Avoid the sin of eating in secret even to the taste of the tongue.'

³ *Collatio II. cap. xi.*: Of a young monk who hid a biscuit (unum paximaceum: each probably weighed a pound (cf. cap. xix.), and two made a meal) at the three o'clock refectory; and cap. xvii., where it is said that it is as bad not to eat at the proper time as to eat before the time. *Col. V. cap. xi.* Eating before the time is the first kind of the sin of gluttony.—*Opera*, Atebati, 1628, pp. 338, 346, 397.

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beyond their strength; and in the advice of Durandus, which deprecates the enforcement of many rules of fasting.¹ At Trinity College, Cambridge, some twenty years ago, there was a custom on solemn fast days to have Matins an hour later than usual, at eight o'clock instead of seven; while Evensong was said three hours earlier, at three o'clock instead of six. Was not this a relic of mediæval abbreviation of the fast between these two services? The same is seen in the question of the recitation of the psalter. The psalter was divided, that priests might say it through once a week; but by the introduction of 'offices of devotion,' and by multiplying festivals when a few short psalms are said, the psalter has been so curtailed that 'in point of fact, according to the practice of the modern Roman Church, a priest is in the habit of reciting about fifty psalms, and not more; these being on the whole the shortest of the psalter.'² Thus the recitation of the psalter by the Roman priests is cut down to less than a third.

But in ancient days the psalter used to be said through daily, as witness St. Patrick, St. Kentigern, St. Maur, St. Egbert, and St. Alcuin.³ This probably issued in cathedral and collegiate chapters saying it daily collectively; that is, each one member would daily say the same three, or five, or ten psalms, so that the whole psalter would be divided amongst the fifty, or thirty, or fifteen members of the chapter, and thus be recited daily. The psalms thus to be said at St. Paul's, London, are still known, as well as those of Sarum and Lincoln. At Lincoln, it is said, they are recited to this day. All honour to the prebendaries!

The name *Breviary* itself bears witness to abbreviated

¹ *De Concilio Celebrando*, pars ii. tit. lvi. Parisiis, 1545, p. 123: 'Nullo modo expedit quod contenta in hoc capitulo sub præcepto ponantur, multa enim immo infinita peccata mortalia sequerentur.'

² Neale *On the Psalms*, 1860, vol. i. p. 20.

³ *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 5.

devotions, and these are even now too long to allow of much thought. An Italian priest, who had at four o'clock in the afternoon just finished his Matins for the next day, was asked if the saying of the Breviary did not occupy much time. He said, 'No, an hour and a quarter every day.' But it was objected that this did not allow much time for thought; to which he replied, 'Oh, dear no! that is not at all required.'¹ Well, therefore, does our Church require the priest 'who ministereth in any parish church or chapel' to say his Matins and Evensong in public, and allow only those who have no control over a public sanctuary to say them in private.

But are there no other instances of enforced rigour bearing evil fruit, or being explained away by laxity? What is the result of compulsory sacerdotal celibacy in the West? Let the records of cathedrals tell it; let Church history, if it dare; let the quantities of canons and restrictions in every *Corpus Juris Ecclesiastici* tell it; let the celibate Bishop Forbes tell it as he does in his valuable commentary on the Thirty-Second Article;² nay, let the wonderful assortment of surnames amongst ourselves, derived from some priestly office tell it. Hence we have the surnames, Pope, Clerk (in all its spellings), Cardinal,

¹ Pauwels (*Theologia Practica*, Lovanii, 1716, tom. ii. p. 599) says that a priest may say his hours at the same time as he is hearing Mass: 'Nec attentiones etiam sibi ullo modo opponuntur; cum enim utrinque sufficiat attentio ad Deum et ad Divina, in unam ex naturâ actionis religiosæ utrinque coalescunt.'

² *Explanation of the Thirty-nine Articles*, by A. P. Forbes, D.C.L., Bishop of Brechin, 1868, vol. ii. pp. 623-655. Cf. St. Bernard, *Sermo lxvi. super Cantica, Opera*, Lyons, 1520, fo. 173.

³ These need do no more than witness to the prevalence of a clergy married, though illegally. In A.D. 1225 the Vicar of Mundham had two wives and produced an alleged dispensation from the pope on that behalf! 'Nolo, domine, excellentiam vestram latere quod quidam capellanus, Willelmus Dens nomine vicarius Ecclesiæ de Mundeham duas habet uxores. . . . Qui quidem Willelmus literas detulit a summo pontifice ut dixit.'—Letter of Simon de Seintiz to Ralph, Bishop of Winchester. *Chronicles, &c.* published under direction of the Master of the Rolls. *Letters illustrative of the Reign of Henry III.*, edited by Shirley, vol. i. p. 277.

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Bishop, Dean, Cantor, Cancellor, Cannon, Parsons, Chaplin, Priest, Arcedeckne (no spelling can make it tell a different tale), Deacon, Vicars, and others with a similar origin.

Then, how sad an example is seen in the rapid decadence of Communion. Frequent Communion was the rule of the early Church, as witnessed by many canons, by passages from the Fathers, some of which appear in the *Decretum* of Gratian.¹ But when the fast before Communion became insisted on, and the fast after Communion became recommended, and previous confession and particular absolution were made compulsory, the Communion of each man sank to thrice a year, and then only to an Easter Communion.

When, therefore, we find such men as Kettlewell and John Johnson of old, and Keble and Neale, if not others² of our own day, disregarding the necessity of this practice of fasting from midnight before Communion, how is it that we hear zealous men speaking of what is technically termed non-Fasting Communion as 'a mortal sin ?' It is quite true that probably some do not know what they mean, and only repeat what they have seen in some Roman Catholic book. Indeed, some cannot mean what they say, for some have said, 'It is different in your case,' when anxious to retain the goodwill of one who did not go to the same lengths of rigour. But they are very solemn words, and, if used too lightly, will accustom men to familiarity which is certain to be harmful. Let us, therefore, rapidly see what they may be supposed to mean now in the mouths of those that use them, and how they may be applied to 'non-Fasting Communion.'

¹ Pars iii. *De Consecratione*, dist. ii. cap. xlii. sq. Lugduni, 1606, col. 1918.

² An anonymous writer in the *Church Review* for August 16, 1873, who signed himself 'M. A. Oxon,' certified from his own knowledge that in theory and practice Charles Marriott and Isaac Williams were of one mind with John Johnson's opinion as expressed in the extract given from his *Unbloody Sacrifice*, below, on p. 372.

The definition of capital, mortal, or deadly sin has varied considerably in the various ages of the Church, and perhaps it may be said that no one definition has gained universal assent.¹ When St. John spoke of 'a sin unto death,' he was probably referring to that class of sins for which, under the Mosaic law, the soul that committed them was to be cut off from his people.² The earliest Church writers class as capital or mortal sins crimes of this kind, such as idolatry, adultery, and murder. For though Morinus³ says that there were three classes of sins amongst the earliest Christians, yet he advances no proof sufficient to bear out his assertion; and Marshall⁴ seems more correct in saying that there were reckoned but two classes of sins amongst the primitive Christians. These two classes were those that were capital sins, and those that were not. For capital sins the Catholics allowed one prolonged public

¹ Thus in the useful *Dictionnaire de Théologie*, par l'Abbé Bergier (Paris, 1863, tom. v. p. 212, s.v. Péché), it is said, 'Il n'est pas toujours aisé de juger si un péché est mortel ou s'il n'est que véniel; il faut faire attention à l'importance du précepte violé,' &c. Though, therefore, we may fully agree with Bishop Forbes (*Explanation of the Thirty-nine Articles*, 1867, p. 237) that the use in the Litany and Article of 'the expression deadly sin implies the distinction between deadly and venial sin, with all the consequences of that distinction;' yet this does not help us to know at all accurately what is this nature of the distinction.

² 1 St. John v. 16. Schoettgen points out that the phrase is not unknown in the language of the *Mishna*; and explains the passage, 'Dicit Johannes, orandum esse pro iis peccatoribus qui non ejusmodi peccata commiserunt, quæ in Lege divinâ mortis poenam merentur. . . . Qui vero tam enorme crimen commisit quod morte dignum est, qualia sunt idololatria, incestus, &c., pro eo non orari jubet Apostolus.' (*Horæ Hebraicæ*, 1733, tom. i. p. 1076.) St. Basil uses the phrase in one of his canonical answers (the 32nd), and the three great Greek canonists differ in their interpretation. Zonaras says he regards it as a sin of *deed*, a thought carried into action. Balsamon regards it as a sin for which capital punishment was due (he calls fornication and theft, &c. *light sins*); and Aristenus regards it as a sinful indulgence of the lusts of the flesh. (*Σύνταγμα κανόνων*, Athens, 1854, tom. iv. p. 173.) See also Johnson's *Vade-Mecum*, 1723, vol. ii. p. 236.

³ 'Antiqua Theologia peccata in tres classes distinguebat. . . . In primâ classe tria tantum collocabant, idololatriam, mœchiam, et homicidium; in secundâ classe cætera quæ nunc a Theologis mortalia dicuntur; in tertiâ venialia omnia.' (Morinus *de Penitentia*, lib. v. cap. i. § 2, Antverpiæ, 1682, p. 250.) There seem no grounds for the second class here enumerated.

⁴ *The Penitential Discipline of the Primitive Church*, by Nathanael Marshall, D.D., chap. iii. § 3, Oxford, 1844, p. 142.

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repentance; the Montanists and cognate heresies allowed none. For sins that were not capital, Catholics allowed private repentance; but the Montanists and their compeers required open penance.

It cannot be this primitive interpretation which our eager brethren attach to the words as they use them; and perhaps we need not search historically into the varying definitions of the words, to discover what is meant in the present century. It is not so much the general definition which need occupy us as the application to particulars. The general definition as given by St. Thomas¹ may be readily accepted: 'Mortal sin proceeds from the aversion of man's will from God by its conversion to some commutable good.' Yet this does not help us very much; and I take it, that what would be accepted most generally now amongst Roman writers, and those that follow them, is the definition as given by the comprehensive summist Silvester of Prierio: 'I say that all sins which are against the precepts of divine, or natural, or human law are mortal sins.'² This seems to cast the net pretty widely—far, far more widely than ever the primitive Christians dreamed of even in their earnest rigour. Can we think, with some, that the Roman theologians thus increase the number of 'mortal' sins, to increase the necessity of private confession to a priest? They say that none but mortal sins need be confessed. If, then, we take the early meaning of these words as only including the grossest crimes—adultery, idolatry, murder, apostasy, and the like—it is to be hoped that there would be little need for confession. But we are told that there is a tendency in modern days to increase

¹ *Summa*, pars iii. quest. lxxxv. art. ii.; Venetiis, 1757, tom. v. p. 601.

² *Sylvestrina Summa, quæ Summa Summarum meriti nuncupatur*, Lugduni, 1551, pars ii. p. 282, s.v. *Peccatum*, § 3. Sylvestro Mazzolini, the author of this work, was a Dominican and 'master of the sacred palace'; he was one of the early opponents of Luther. This *Summa* is a marvel of conciseness and learning, and was very popular, for it passed through many editions.

the catalogue of mortal sins.¹ On the other hand, Silvester of Prierio tells us that 'venial sins are, according to rule, all that are against mandates or counsels.' This drives us to find out the difference between a 'mandate' which we may without much danger break, and a precept, the offence against which is capital or mortal. The same clear summist shall help us here: 'A precept is the motion of a superior or a law commanding us to do or omit something of duty, that is, of necessity to salvation. Whence it differs from a mandate, for this is a motion to something better, which is not necessary to salvation.' This, again, limits the extent of a mortal sin, or seems to do so. Let us see how this definition of mortal sin helps us to understand the language of our rigorist brethren.

'A mortal sin is an offence against the precepts of divine, or natural, or human law.' Now, Fasting Communion is no precept of divine law. 'This is *not* a duty commanded by God,' says Bishop Jeremy Taylor. And though some would try to persuade us that St. Augustine says it is a duty commanded by God, we have seen that there is every reason to suppose he is only affirming that a canon on the subject had been passed by a plenary Council of Africa.² None can suppose that it is a precept of natural law. The natural law on the subject is that Communion should be an

¹ The mistake of this was well pointed out by Montesquieu: 'Les lois humaines, faites pour parler à l'esprit, doivent donner des préceptes, et point de conseils: la religion, faite pour parler au cœur, doit donner beaucoup de conseils, et peu de préceptes. Quand par exemple elle donne des règles, non pas pour le bien mais pour le meilleur, non pas pour ce qui est bon, mais pour ce qui est parfait, il est convenable que ce soient des conseils et non pas des lois; car la perfection ne regarde pas l'universalité des hommes ni des choses. De plus, si ce sont des lois, il en faudra une infinité d'autres pour faire observer les premières. Le célibat fut un conseil du christianisme: lorsqu'on en fit une loi pour un certain ordre de gens, il en fallut chaque jour de nouvelles pour réduire des hommes à l'observation de celle-ci. Le législateur se fatigua, il fatigua la société pour faire exécuter aux hommes, par précepte, ce que ceux qui aiment la perfection auroient exécuté comme conseil.'—*De l'Esprit des Lois*, lib. xxiv. chap. vii. *Œuvres*, Paris, 1820, tom. ii. p. 238.

² See above, p. 308 seq.

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act of extreme reverence, without specifying any particulars accompanying such act. This was left to human positive law. Here then, probably, is the reason why it is said in Roman books, that to communicate otherwise than fasting from all food since the previous midnight is a mortal sin, because it is contrary to a precept of human law binding within the Roman obedience.

Now, there is some ground for this in the Roman Canons, and in the rubrics enforcing the canons. There is the precept of human law, and, wherever these rubrics of the Roman missal are binding, there in this sense it may be said to be a mortal sin to offend against this precept. But this does not affect English Churchmen. Where is the human law binding the consciences of English Churchmen? Perhaps some will say there is the Anglo-Saxon Canon. But this in the same breath (so to speak) makes it a mortal sin not to attend High Mass and the sermon fasting. There is nothing in the canon to distinguish between this command and Fasting Communion. Others may say, there is the Canon of Constance. Well, in this case it is heresy (a mortal sin) to say that it is unlawful to withhold the cup from the laity; and it is a mortal sin to communicate the laity in the chalice! Some one else may allege the Quinisext Canon. But this allows Communion after food on Maundy Thursday, so long as Lent is observed; and the gloss¹ in Gratian distinctly says that the rule admitting Communion after food on Maundy Thursday is abrogated 'by the contrary custom;' just as St. Thomas² says, the fast after Communion is only abrogated 'by the contrary custom,' and by no repealing enactment. If, then, the

¹ *Decretum*, pars iii. *De Consecratione*, dist. i. cap. xlix. (Lugduni, 1606, col. 1902), § *Exceptio*: 'Derogatum est per contrariam consuetudinem.' It is numbered amongst the canons abrogated by disuser and the contrary custom in the *Sylvestrina Summa*, s.v. *Lex*, pars ii. p. 139.

² 'Nunc autem, quia oportet frequentius sacra mysteria celebrare, non posset de facili observari; et ideo per contrariam consuetudinem est abrogatum.' —*Summa*, pars iii. quæst. lxxx. art. viii. ad finem, Venetils, 1757, p. 547.

canons have 'by the contrary custom' alone lost binding force in the matter of attending High Mass and the sermon fasting, or in giving the chalice to the laity, or in enforcing a fast after Communion, they *pari consequentiâ* need not bind us in the other limits of the same precepts. I maintain in this essay that there is no canon now binding in England enforcing Fasting Communion; and I maintain this on the same ground that Bartholomew of Brescia (probably) maintains the abrogation of the Maundy celebration after the *Cæna Domini*, and St. Thomas Aquinas asserts the abrogation of the fast after Communion—viz. abrogation by disuse, and the prevalence of the contrary custom. When, therefore, some, under the guidance of a Roman book, affirm that non-Fasting Communion is a mortal sin, they probably are ignorant that what is indeed a *præceptum Ecclesiæ Romanæ* may fail to find a place amongst the present effective *præcepta Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*.¹ This is the only explanation that I can find for such language.

With us it would seem to be, at the most, what Silvester of Prierio would call 'a mandate or counsel.' It would stand on the same ground as celibacy. Of this the Lord said, 'He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.' This would be true only of the minority even of priests: but when it is forced on all, terrible is the result. With us, especially in country places where the church is often some miles distant from some of the communicants, it is not possible for some to communicate with reverent recollection without having taken some food since midnight. 'Your Christianity would seem to be only for the young and for the strong,' said a gentle invalid to an eager rigorist. If it be forced on all, terrible infrequency of Communion is the result. For those that are able to offer this self-denial or devotion, it is far better that they should; 'he

¹ What is allowed in one place may be a mortal sin in another. E.g. it is permissible to smoke, or take snuff, or chew tobacco before celebration in Italy, but this is mortal sin in Mexico. See below, p. 365, note 1.

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v, p. 365, note 1.

that is able to receive it, let him receive it.' But there is no precept of the English Church binding the conscience to this devotion.¹

The custom seems to have arisen towards the close of the fourth century, when the conversion of the Imperial Court to Christianity brought many into the Church from fashion or for convenience. There is every reason for seeing the advisability if not the necessity of such a rule in such times; but certainly the quotations from the writings of the Fathers do not prove anything more than this, while they do not bear out the universality claimed for the custom. Cardinal Bona acknowledges that this is the case; he says that the custom was held neither *semper* nor *ab omnibus*.² If this be so, there can be no ground for thinking it Apostolical³ in its origin, nor necessarily binding in itself;

¹ On the question of ancient laws binding the conscience Bishop Taylor is explicit. 'We are to enquire whether the thing be a law in that government to which we owe obedience; for that the fathers met at Laodicea, at Antioch, at Nice, at Gangra, a thousand, eleven hundred, or thirteen hundred years ago, should have authority over us in England so many ages after is so infinitely unreasonable that none but the "fearful and unbelievers" [Rev. xxi. 8], the scrupulous and those who are *δοῦλοι τῇ φόβῃ*, of a slavish nature, and are in bondage by their fear, and know not how to stand in that liberty by which Christ hath made them free, will account themselves in subjection to them. If upon this account the rulers of churches will introduce any pious, just, and warrantable canon, we are to obey in all things where they have power to command; but the canon for being in the old codes of the Church binds us no more than the laws of Constantine.'—*Ductor Dubitantium*, bk. iii. chap. iv. Rule 14, ed. Eden, 1855, vol. x. p. 358.

² 'Et hæc quidem vetus institutio fuit, sed non *semper* nec *ab omnibus* custodita.' (*Res Liturgicæ*, lib. i. cap. xxi. § 2, ed. Sala, Augustæ Taurinorum, 1749, tom. ii. p. 110.) His reference is evidently to the well-known rule of St. Vincent of Lerins, by which to test Catholicity, 'curandum est ut id teneamus quod *ubique*, quod *semper*, quod *ab omnibus* creditum est.' The opinion, therefore, that it is an Apostolic tradition is a mistake. Pauwels, in his useful *Theologia Practica* (Lovanii, 1716, tom. ii. p. 459) asserts the contrary to Cardinal Bona's statement: 'Praxis de præmittendo jejuniis sacræ Communioni, in omnibus Ecclesiis semper fuit observata, nec ejus institutio in ullâ Synodo reperitur, igitur concludo: ergo est Apostolica traditio, seu ab ipsis Apostolis introducta.' I maintain that in this essay it is shown to have been introduced in the fourth century, and first enforced at the Council of Hippo in A.D. 393: ergo it is not Apostolical.

³ The definition of an Apostolical tradition may here be added from St. Augustine: 'That which the universal Church holds, and was not instituted

and if we examine the testimony of the Fathers, the assertion of Cardinal Bona will be found to be as accurate as most of the conclusions of that scholarly writer.

The patriarchs of Alexandria, even in the fifth century, had been found to be decidedly ante-rigorous in their determinations. St. Ambrose¹ could have known of no rigorous precept binding under pain of mortal sin, otherwise he would not have written, 'if hunger compels you to take the daily *prandium*, or intemperance sets aside the fast, yet preserve yourself the more by the heavenly feast.' This bears the *prima facie* meaning, that if a man is really unable to keep Lent, and omit the morning meal (which the ordinary rule of Lent required), yet he should all the more go on communicating; though in Lent the celebrations were subsequent to the time for the *prandium*. It is quite true that St. Ambrose goes on to persuade men to keep Lent, but he says no more than an earnest priest would say now, though he were no rigorous. Several of the Fathers speak of the previous period of fasting preparing the soul by mortification for reverent reception; but it must be always remembered, that this is in no wise the fast before Communion thought of now-a-days. It is, therefore, not to the point to cite such passages in favour of Fasting Communion, because this is now defined to be a mere abstaining from any food since the previous midnight, however short a time that may represent.

Other quotations from the Fathers merely have reference to the time of day, such as St. Gregory's 'before supper,' which can be no argument in itself, and would be useful in illustration only if external authorities had proved the universality of the custom. The only citations really to

by Councils, but was *always* retained, is most surely believed to have been handed down by no less than Apostolical authority.' (*De Baptismo*, lib. iv. cap. xxiv. § 31; *Opera*, Parisiis, 1694, tom. ix. col. 140.) By Cardinal Bona's omission it is shown not to be Apostolical.

¹ *In psalmum* cxviii. Expositio. Sermo 8, § 48, *Opera*, Paris (Gauthier), 1836, tom. ii. p. 283. See the whole passage above, page 246.

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§ 48, *Opera*, Paris (Gauthier), above, page 246.

the point are to be found in St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine, both at the commencement of the fifth century. But in the accusations against St. Chrysostom, the fast after Communion was spoken of in the same strain as the fast before Communion: and St. Chrysostom, as has been seen, allows the possibility of a reverent non-Fasting Communion, which modern rigorists would deny. The quotation from St. Augustine, then, is the one most to the purpose.

It is curious and instructive to see how the quotations from the Fathers grew, and how much work this one quotation from St. Augustine has done. It has been so often quoted apart from its context, that it has had to bear a meaning which the context fails to justify. It appears in almost all, if not all, the old ritualists¹ up to the time of Gratian. Then Gratian (cir. A.D. 1150) incorporated the passage in his *Decretum*.² St. Thomas Aquinas³ (d. A.D. 1274) seems to know no more than this stock quotation, which (as we have seen) he presses farther than it will bear. Gabriel Biel⁴ (cir. A.D. 1490) quotes nothing more. The 'King's Book' (A.D. 1543) has the same.⁵ The exhaustive and once popular *Summa Summarum*⁶ of Sylvestro Mazzolini (cir. A.D. 1550) makes no further reference than to Gratian. Bishop Jeremy Taylor⁷ (cir. A.D. 1660) seems content with this one extract, which he quotes more than once. But in the meantime printing had made the work of the Summists less necessary, and had multiplied copies of the Fathers, and made them more accessible; and a change

¹ St. Isidore (cir. A.D. 600) (*De Ecclesiasticis Officiis*, lib. i. cap. xviii.) evidently quotes from this passage (*Opera*, Coloniae Agrippinae, 1617, p. 395 A). So, too, Bishop Amalarius (cir. A.D. 800), *De Eccl. Officiis*, lib. iii. cap. xxxiv. Both are to be found in Hittorpius, *De Divinis Officiis*, Romae, 1591, pp. 6 and 175.

² Pars iii. *De Consecratione*, dist. ii. cap. liv. Lugduni, 1606, col. 1940.

³ *Summa*, Pars iii. quaest. lxxx. art. 8, Venetiis, 1757, tom. v. p. 546.

⁴ *Super Canone Missae*, lectio x. lit. a. Lugduni, 1542, fo. 13.

⁵ *Formularies of Faith*, Oxford, 1825, p. 268.

⁶ *Sylvestrina Summa*, Lugduni, 1551, pars i. p. 346, s.v. *Eucharistia*.

⁷ *Life of Christ*, part ii. § xii. discourse 13. Ed. Eden, vol. ii. p. 484; also *Worthy Communicant*, cap. vii. § 1, vol. viii. p. 221.

came, and quotations were multiplied. Giustiniani ¹ (A.D. 1611), Petau ² (A.D. 1650), and Cardinal Bona ³ (A.D. 1671) brought new quotations into the field. These first quoted the passages now alleged by all who speak of the subject; but the quotations only show the wisdom of their predecessors in adhering only to St. Augustine; for none of the passages are receptive of the extensive bearing which some would wish to impart into them. Since the time of Cardinal Bona there has been nothing of importance discovered, but the remarkable theory of a lost Canon of Nicaea.⁴

It is also instructive to watch the gradual advance in the meaning of the word 'fasting,' as applied to those about to communicate. For a long time it was only applied to one kind of fast, which would now be called an ecclesiastical fast. But when reverence and devotion brought in the idea, that it was congruous to the dignity of the Sacrament that it should be the first food taken in the day (an idea introduced to persuade men to accept a necessary rule), then there was no idea of midnight being in any question; but it was the first food after the night's sleep probably, since sleep was supposed to have a great part in digestion. But as some persons did not sleep, then it was laid down that a man was fasting ready for Communion when digestion was complete. So said the Glossator upon Gratian.⁵

¹ *In omnes B. Pauli Epistolas Explanations*, Lugduni, 1612, tom. i. p. 561. On 1 Cor. xi. 21.

² *De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia*, III. ii. §§ 7, 8; *Opera de Theologicis Dogmatibus*, Venetiis, 1722, tom. iv. p. 80.

³ *Res Liturgicae*, lib. i. cap. xxi. § 1, ed. Sala. Augustæ Taurinorum, 1749, vol. ii. p. 108.

⁴ See above, p. 89.

⁵ The gloss is upon the Canon of Carthage which is given in Gratian, *Decretum*, pars iii. *De Consecratione*, dist. i. cap. xlix. Lugduni, 1606, col. 1902: 'But when shall a man be called *fasting*? Say that I eat to-day, and sleep not by day nor night; am I fasting at the beginning of another day? Some say that I am (*Extra de Temp. Ord. Literas*). Otherwise sleep would be said to break the fast, which I do not believe; but I say that the fast exists when digestion is complete.' The reference explains the text. A subdeacon

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So, then, Gratian, or rather his annotator, would reckon a man fasting some three hours after a meal,¹ without any question about the striking of midnight between the meal and the moment when the man would be said to be *jejunus*.

But in the thirteenth century St. Thomas provided the most convenient definition ;² for he said, that if a man took no food after the commencement of the day, as the Roman Church computed the day, that man was fasting the fast of nature, and ready for reverent Communion. This was a most convenient definition, for it swept away all difficulties about digestion, and sleep, and all other such questions.

But there were other doctors in the thirteenth century who still clung to the notion of the ecclesiastical (as distinguished from the so-called natural) fast ; and these said that a man might take electuaries, or ginger, or such like, by way of stay-stomach, without impediment to reverent Communion. This opinion did not find favour ; and,

had been elected bishop, and, in order to hasten matters, the Bishop of Bologna ordained him deacon on Saturday and priest on Sunday, as none might be promoted two steps on the same day. Out of reverence for the canon which ordered candidate and bishop to be fasting at ordinations, the fast was continued all night. But here was a nice point for subtlety of casuistry. The Pope when he heard of it punished both candidate and bishop ; the bishop was suspended from giving orders, and the new priest from all priestly functions. Why ? Because *fictione canonica* the continuation of the fast either added Sunday morning to Saturday, or attached Saturday to Sunday ; and so *fictione canonica* the two orders had been conferred on the same day ! But if sleep had broken the fast they need not have been suspended. It would have been more appropriate if the suspension had been a *fictio* as well.—*Decretales Gregorii*, lib. i. tit. xi. cap. xiii. Lugduni, 1606, col. 256.

¹ Experiments with a view to ascertain the period taken up by digestion, were made upon one Alexis St. Martin, whose stomach had been lacerated and so healed as to allow of inspection. The following is an abstract from the result : 'Dr. Beaumont's observations show that the process of digestion in the stomach, during health, takes place so rapidly, that a full meal consisting of animal and vegetable substances may nearly all be converted into chyme in about an hour, and the stomach left empty in two hours and a half.'—Kirkes' *Handbook of Physiology*, London, 1848, p. 213.

² *Summa, Secunda Secunda*, quest. cxlvii. art. 6, ad. 2, Venetiis, 1756, tom. iv. p. 178.

indeed, Sala, in his notes upon Bona, says that such an opinion ought to be held as an 'error in faith.'¹ This is nearly approaching to a heresy; and therefore it is *almost* as bad as giving the cup to the laity!

Further refinements were soon introduced. The popular summist, Sylvester of Prierio, says that a man may clean his teeth with salt and vinegar, so long as he does not swallow any. Later ritualists forbid this luxury. The question was raised as to whether a man was properly fasting if he said his Matins the afternoon before, and took any food afterwards; or whether he had to say Matins again the next morning, of necessity, before communicating. Then came the question of a man going to sleep with a lozenge or sugar-candy in his mouth, to prevent coughing in the night: how can he be assured that he had not swallowed some after midnight? Here was a nice question for the casuists; and there are two opinions on the subject: the weight of authority inclines to the determination that such a thing impedes Communion.² Then comes the question of tobacco. Here was something that would comfort and prevent wretchedness of hunger, without breaking the *fast of nature*.³ A man, then, may smoke, chew tobacco, or take snuff, though he swallow either smoke, or juice, or snuff; unless he does it *per industriam*, of set purpose to eat, or to take it as food. This decision must have been arrived at by devotees to this narcotic leaf: others would perhaps think such a determination the reverse of reverent. Though this, therefore, is the rule of Roman and Continental casuistry, there are canons passed in Mexico, which make it a matter of eternal condemnation

¹ He thinks, 'ut hæc opinio error in fide censeri debeat.'—Augustæ Taurinorum, 1749, vol. ii. p. 109.

² Quarti *Commentaria in Rubricas Missalis*, iii. tit. ix. diff. 2, Venetiis, 1727, p. 370. Gavanti *Thesaurus Sac. Rituum*, cum add. Merati, pars iii. tit. ix. Venetiis, 1769, vol. i. p. 211.

³ Quarti *Commentaria*, and Gavanti *Thesaurus*, quoted before.

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to take snuff before Mass.¹ What, therefore, is allowed in Italy is mortal sin in America. Then, again, we read that water *attracta per nares*, drawn up through the nostrils, does not break the fast so as to hinder Communion. And so on through many curious scruples (such again as swallowing paper or parchment), which seem perhaps to an English mind to show that the chief end in view is not reverence to the Sacrament, but the keeping the rule in the rubric.

For it must be said, again, that the reason why it binds so strongly the users of the unreformed office books is, that the custom has been incorporated into one of the *Rubricæ generales*, which bind all those who use those books. Fasting Communion is binding *ratione præcepti*, and therefore there must be a variety of questions as to what the *præceptum* really means.²

But in England the domestic canons on this head never found their way into the rubrics of the Sarum Missal; hence we find no discussions in Lyndwood as to whether sucking a piece of ivory or bone breaks the fast. It may be that this is owing to what Dr. Newman³ calls our 'national good sense.'

Still the fact remains, the custom of Fasting Commu-

¹ 'Certè ante Missæ celebrationem omnis usus tabaci deberet extirpari, et videntur novi orbis populi magis hanc indecentiam computendere quam nos Europæi. In Concilio Mexicano "præcipitur ne sacerdos ante Missæ celebrationem, aut quævis alia persona ante Communionem, quidquam tabaci per modum fumalis evaporationis, vel quovis modo percipiat." Item in Concilio Limensi "prohibetur sub reatu pænæ æternæ damnationis Presbyteris celebrantibus, ne tabaci pulverem naribus etiam prætextu medicinæ ante sacrificium sumant." Episcopus quoque Castoriensis in suis constitutionibus "Tabacum ut vocant, vel aliquid simile sumere ante celebrationem omnino prohibemus quocumque prætextu, medicinæ vel sanitatis, id demum fiat."—*Theologia Practica*, auctore Nicolao Pauwels, Lovanii, 1716, tom. ii. p. 462.

² As Montesquieu, quoted above: 'Si ce sont des lois, il en faudra une infinité d'autres pour faire observer les premières.'

³ 'I suppose we owe it to the national good sense that English Catholics have been protected from the extravagances which are elsewhere to be found.'—Dr. Newman's *Letter to Pusey*, 1866, p. 105.

nion, with all its various questions of time and manner, has been in abeyance in England for some three hundred years and more. It cannot come under the head of a canon badly kept, for there has been no protest, still less a continuous protest, against its non-observance by the rulers of the Church. It must, therefore, come under the head of a custom discontinued, or a canon abrogated by disuser. When a custom or canon is abrogated, it is, as Gratian tells us, 'wholly removed' as binding; or, as Gibert says, it is 'dead' and valueless. The precise effect of disuser may be open to argument, but whether the canon be said to be removed, or dead, or asleep, the result is the same: it ceases to claim allegiance until it be revived by the proper officer, who is the same as the original imposer—none under the degree of bishop.

The custom arose, as all seem to agree, because of the profanation of the Sacrament by those who had eaten or drunk to excess. There is little, if any, fear that this danger of excess remains now in the usual English breakfast. The introduction of tea and coffee has wholly altered the face of affairs, and with changed habits comes naturally change of custom. But the same causes still hold with respect to *post-prandial* celebrations. The very name has even now a suspicious tone about it, just as it had when the Bishops of Mauritania asked to have 'post-prandial' celebrations prohibited.¹ Therefore now, in London, the midnight celebrations are generally forbidden amongst Roman Catholics; although, according to their *technical law*, a man is fasting at five minutes past midnight, though he have been eating and drinking up to the stroke of midnight. The midnight Christmas Communion has also been given up in some London churches, where for some years it had been customary. The same causes still hold against evening Communions; therefore Bishop Wilberforce spoke well and

¹ 'De sacrificiis inhibendis *post prandium*.'—*Codex Ecclesie Africana*, can. xlvii. Justelli *Bibliotheca*, Parisiis, 1661, tom. i. p. 351.

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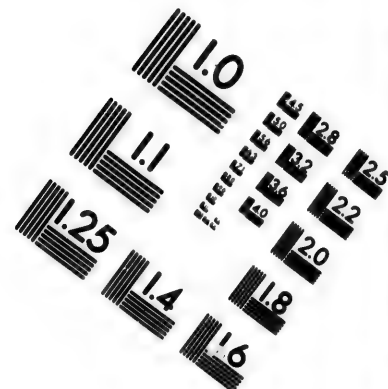
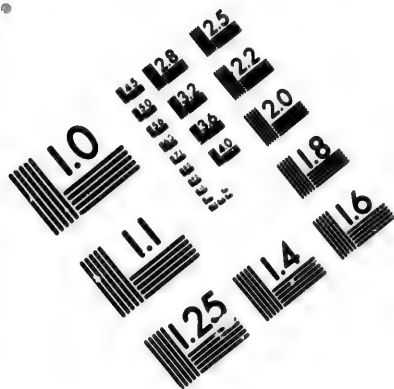
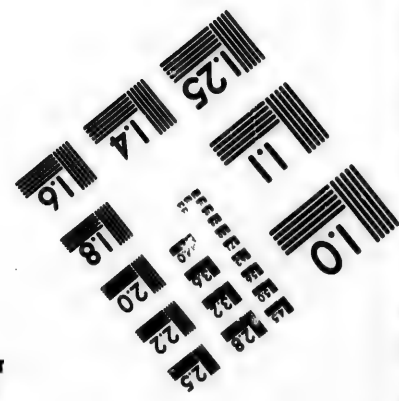
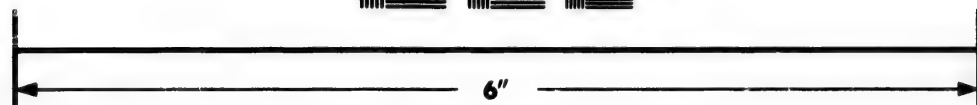
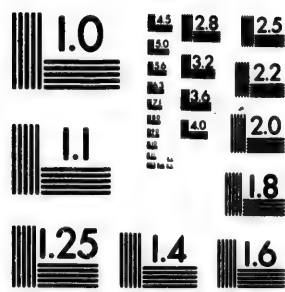


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wisely in condemnation of them. These are all after the heavy meal of the day, when there would be some danger in a mixed congregation of some men having their spiritual faculties clouded by undigested food, and their brain wearied with the cares of the day, and dulled by sinking energies. It is impossible to think that evening Communion will ever again meet with approbation.

But the case is different in the mid-day or morning Communion. Here there are no symptoms of profane irreverence. Our congregations are now probably more orderly than the world ever saw. In the time of St. Chrysostom disorder was common, even at the very time of Communion, as we have seen; so, again, in the time of St. Gregory of Tours, and mediæval times, disturbances, like those of St. George's in the East, were not so strange as those seemed to us. The multitudes that throng our churches, at all events when the worship of God is rendered with some apparent degree of care, are to all appearance devout and reverent. Those who remain to communicate at mid-day are not behindhand in exhibiting tokens of true devotion. We are, indeed, able to thank God and take courage, since, after so many years of fighting and trouble, indifference and deadness, the Church of England is exhibiting the truest tokens of a true Church. The Greek Archbishop of Syra and Tenos acknowledged, 'The English seem to me to carry their Christianity into their daily lives more than any other nation with which I am familiar.'

The present action of the rigorists is to break up this: 'and what do they offer in exchange? One person is reported to have been forbidden prospectively to communicate for two years, since for two years early celebrations would probably be out of reach! This was not that there

¹ It is much to be feared that the working of the new Public Worship Regulation Bill will introduce into our churches some of the disorders with which the Middle Ages were familiar.

could be no abstinence from food till after the mid-day Communion, but lest others should think food had been taken previously. Many are taught not only to think lightly of Matins and Evensong as acts of worship, but during these services to be occupied with books of private devotion, by way of thanksgiving for Communion received, or preparation for future Communion, so that they give attendance without joining in the act of common worship of the Church of God.¹ Surely increased reverence for the supreme act of worship might be inculcated without any attempt being made to degrade the other acts of worship. Men are too ready to give up the worship of God, and to find excuses for so doing; and the tendency of this teaching is to bring in the idleness of the foreign Sunday, which cannot be too earnestly deprecated. It is instructive to see that the Anglo-Saxon canon insists in very distinct terms upon men of every order attending *High Mass*, and *hearing the sermon* as well, before tasting any food.

But while the danger of the idleness of the foreign Sunday creeping into England is earnestly deprecated, the 'good custom' of receiving fasting is not 'despised.' God forbid! No more than the single life of a devoted celibate priest is despised. But neither is compulsory in the English Church, though both are in 'transmarine' office books. What is required is, that the whole spirit be bowed down in deepest adoration of the love which has found such a means of conveying the Bread of Life to the soul of man: but there must be at the same time reception.

In the earliest Church frequent Communion was without question the rule; and Gratian, who supplies the one quotation from St. Augustine for Fasting Communion, supplies many quotations from various fathers for frequency of Communion. St. Thomas, too, lays down the advisa-

¹ As has been seen, some Roman doctors say that a priest may, at the same time, say his hours and hear Mass, both of which are compulsory under pain of mortal sin.

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bility of constantly communicating.¹ He says that, considered in itself, the Sacrament should be received daily; and, considered on the part of the receiver, it is praiseworthy to receive daily. Indeed, no Christian surely can doubt that constant Communion is *most* desirable. As the Ambrosiaster wrote (if it be not St. Ambrose himself), 'If the Blood of Christ, as often as it is poured out, is poured out for the remission of sins, I ought always to receive Him that my sins may always be forgiven. I, who continually sin, ought continually to have medicine.'

But by degrees the habit of receiving fasting came in, partly because of scandal and danger of scandal, partly perhaps out of the memory of the ante-lucan meetings in time of persecution. The sketch given by the Greek monk, Joannes Phurnes, of the introduction of the custom, and the study of the Canons on the subject and the various passages from the Fathers, all show how gradually the habit was introduced. But, as by degrees this custom advanced, contemporaneously, as it would seem, the custom of frequent reception receded. It is not perhaps easy now to say whether this arose from the enforced habit of coming fasting, or from the laxity of manners which rendered the enforcement of the habit necessary. St. Chrysostom blames those who had taken the *ariston*, or heavy morning meal, for not coming to church to hear the Scriptures read and the sermon preached; it may be, therefore, that the impression upon the people on this head was such that the habit of Fasting Communion became the cause of Communion becoming rarer. Elsewhere he blames men for coming to church without communicating; saying, that if they were unfit to communicate, they should be in a state of penitence, and leave when the penitents left. Still, whatever the origin was, the fact remains, that when a previous and subsequent fast became to be thought of importance, the custom of frequent Communion gradually

¹ *Summa*, pars iii. quæst. lxxx. art. 10, Venetiis, 1757, tom. v. p. 549.

receded, until the laity only communicated once a year at the most. It was this sad state of things that the Church of England attempted to correct at her Reformation. She abolished 'private Mass' altogether, that is, when none but the priest communicated; and at the same time she made arrangements for daily Communion, if possible. There had been no rubric in the Sarum use, which was adopted as 'the use of the Church of England,'¹ compelling the laity to Fasting Communion, nor any canon in Lyndwood: so this was dropped out altogether. That a man must confess and be absolved before Communion was laid down in Lyndwood; so this was still recognized, but the compulsion to it was removed.

It has been pointed out to me that the chief reason at present for the non-Communion of men on the Continent, is the compulsory attendance at confession previous to Communion. The Confessional has been made a political engine to enforce the particular views of the Roman Curia; and men have revolted against the application of the screw in this manner, and have trusted rather to God's mercy than man's inquisition. This, however, is not an insurmountable difficulty. In Rome, where this engine was used with all its torture, the compulsion was cheaply evaded. A number of old women used to go the round of all the priests in Rome, and obtain from each a ticket testifying that the bearer had confessed, and had been absolved, and might therefore partake of the Easter Communion. By this means each woman obtained a number of tickets, which she sold at the market price, which, I am told, was generally five pence. This system can only prevail in large towns; therefore this may be a reason for the abstention of men from Communion. But in England, as we are at present constituted, the enforcement of Fasting Communion, as explained by Roman casuists and commentators, would unquestionably hinder the majority of persons from

¹ Title-page of Book of Common Prayer.

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communicating, at all events with desirable frequency. I have mentioned before that I have known of a case of a person forbidden to communicate at all for two years, since for two years, in all human probability, early Communions would be beyond reach !

That the question of Fasting Communion was not forgotten altogether, and did not, therefore, drop out without consideration, may be seen from the following passage from Hutchinson¹ (A.D. 1552), which, it is hoped, none will despise, though it is taken from one of the Parker Society's publications :—

Moreover, in that the text saith that 'whiles they were eating Jesus took bread,' and ordained his Last Supper, some do reason hereof that the Sacrament is not to be received fasting, as the custom now is, but after other meats and drinks, after a certain refectation, banquet, or maundy ; which they say those that be rich should make to refresh the poor and needy. For the defence of this maundy they allege not only Christ's example, but also where it is written that the Corinthians, indeed, kept such a maundy. But Paul reprehendeth them therefore, and disannulleth their custom as an occasion of gluttony, of drunkenness, of pride, of contention, and other misbehaviour in the Church, saying unto them, 'Have ye not houses to eat and drink in, or else despise ye the congregation of God?' And again, 'If any man hunger, let him eat at home : that ye come not together unto condemnation.' Now Christ did not celebrate this Sacrament after other meats and drinks to stablish any such custom, nor to give us any example to do the like, but rather to teach us that our Sacramental bread is succeeded instead of the Jews' Easter lamb, and that their ceremony is now disannulled and abrogated. Therefore the Universal Church commonly, according to Paul's mind to the Corinthians, useth now to celebrate the Lord's Supper fasting, without any maundy, and not after other meats. Notwithstanding, as he doth well which cometh fasting to the Lord's Table, so he doth not ill which, by occasion, cometh after he hath eaten and drunk. Meat and drink do not defile, do not make a man an unmeet guest for Christ's board, for the marriage dinner of the

¹ The *Works* of Roger Hutchinson, Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and afterwards of Eton College, 1842, Parker Society edition, p. 221.

King's Son ; but lack of the wedding garment, that is, sin and iniquity. There is no commandment in the Scriptures which restraineth those that have eaten from Communion. Paul reproveth not the Corinthians for any such thing, but because they made maundies and banquets in the house of prayer. In their own houses he doth not forbid them to eat and drink before the Communion, but permitteth it, and leaveth them to their own liberty and necessity herein, saying, 'If any man hunger, let him eat at home.'

Nor is this expression of opinion singular ; we find it also in the Anglo-Catholic Library. There is a remarkable passage in one of John Johnson's works, which by some strange accident is found out of its place upon an inserted leaf at the end of the second volume of his works.¹ It has thus probably escaped the notice of many, and, as it is remarkably in harmony with the object of the present essay, it is quoted at length, for about Johnson's orthodoxy there can be no question :—

It may seem strange to some that I have not mentioned fasting as an exercise very proper to prepare men for the Eucharist, and to express their reverence towards it. But it is to be remembered that I take my rules of preparation from the Primitive Church. They who communicated every day could not prepare themselves for it by fasting the day before, unless they had made their whole lives one continual course of abstinence ; and they who received thrice, twice, or once a week, had no reason to doubt but by abstaining every Wednesday and Friday till three o'clock in the afternoon (which was then the general practice) they did what was sufficient as to this particular. Fasting has always been thought a very proper exercise for Christians, whether they communicate or not. And of the two they who do not communicate have the greatest reason to fast ; for they by their own confession are unworthy of the Sacrament, and therefore ought to look on themselves as in the state of penitence.

The Primitive Christians did for the most part celebrate the Eucharist before daylight, and, therefore, most probably took it upon an empty stomach ; yet there is no just cause to believe that

¹ *Works of John Johnson* (Anglo-Catholic Library), vol. ii. at end, 'Addenda et corrigenda.'

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they thought this necessary; at least, I am not sensible that they tell us so. Tertullian, in his treatise of fasting, says not a word on this head, though he was very rigid as to the duty of fasting in general. But it is very probable that the custom of communicating before daylight brought in this other practice of receiving the Sacrament in their fasting spittle. Towards the end of the fourth century it seemed a fault to some to break one's fast on the Communion day before receiving the Sacrament, and soon after, the priest was forbidden to administer it after he had eaten or drunk; yet even in the fifth century whole Churches chose to have their Communion in the evening, and upon a full stomach: therefore the practice of the Church was not always and everywhere the same as to this particular. It is well known that our Saviour first gave it to the Apostles after supper, therefore to take it on an empty stomach cannot be absolutely necessary. They who find that abstinence exalts their devotion ought by all means to use it on this occasion, according to the best examples of the fourth age of Christianity and of the following times. But there are many who cannot communicate fasting without great uneasiness and indevotion, unless they could go directly from their bed to the Altar; and these men must indulge the cravings of an inferior nature, so far as to quiet their spirits and preserve a due attention of mind in the service of God. This I say especially in relation to those clergymen who have crazy bodies, and have no assistance on Communion days. For they who are to speak for two hours together with little interruption will find by dear-bought experience that they destroy their own constitutions if they allow no supply to nature. And, indeed, we of this northern climate are vain if we pretend to imitate the old Eastern, African, or Italian Christians in their fastings. Our air is much more severe than theirs, and preys with a much sharper edge on our spirits and vitals. But both clergy and people ought to confine themselves to what is barely sufficient to keep nature from sinking, and especially to abstain from all intoxicating liquors, when they come to appear before God.

It is to be wished that the moderation¹ and wisdom of

¹ Moderation is not confined to writers in our Communion. I would earnestly commend the following saying of St. Raymund (Penitentiary of Gregory IX. ob. A.D. 1275) to those priests who rashly speak of mortal sin: 'Unum tamen consulo, quod non sis nimis pronus judicare mortalia peccata, ubi tibi non constat per *certam* Scripturam esse mortalia.'—S. Raymundi *Summa*, lib. iii. tit. xxxiv. Verone, 1744, p. 428.

these extracts would commend themselves to all. For if now that the Blessed Sacrament is more frequented, and danger from excessive eating or wine-bibbing before mid-day has passed away, there is a successful attempt made to insist on fasting from the previous midnight before Communion; then, in a few years, when youthful zeal has cooled, there will be a return to the perilous neglect of Communion which existed in late mediæval times, and is now generally prevalent abroad. What the Fathers seem to have feared especially was danger from wine in the morning; this made men sleepy (as is seen in St. Chrysostom's sermons), if it did not make them more unfit for Communion. Now the 'morning draught' of tea or coffee, or such like, has (except in the case of frequenters of public-houses, who are not to be found at God's altar) entirely removed all fear of such scandal. Indeed, as John Johnson points out, there is often more settled quietude of mind after the usual light breakfast than before.

It is the duty of every Christian to communicate frequently, and with the utmost reverence. Neither Holy Scripture nor the Church of England insists on fasting from the previous midnight as a necessity to Communion. Indeed, it is impossible to believe that our dear Lord would have instituted the Sacrament of His Love during and after Supper, if to communicate after food might be, as Mr. Oxenham says, 'what God has forbidden.'

In conclusion, it must be said that this essay has been written piece-meal, in the midst of town parish work, which allows of little leisure. It was commenced and continued reluctantly, but there was wanted some utterance of a defence of the position of the English Church in this matter; and, as none better came forward, I have ventured on this essay, partly to quiet (if possible) some scruples, but mainly to further the truth (which must ever be part of the glory) of God. May the great Head of the Church pardon all the errors herein contained!

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